Ganymede, male
cup bearer of the Gods
Henry Osborn

Milton
discussion of poem
1916 – 204.

The Three Fates.
(Distaff) Clotho.
(Spins) Lachesis.
(Shears) Atropos.

Jo: Milton

After an engraving by FAITHORNE.

# MILTON'S

# L'ALLEGRO, IL PENSEROSO

# COMUS AND LYCIDAS


EDITED
WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES
BY

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To the Memory

of

My Mother

# PREFACE.

In Milton's *Tractate of Education* there is a passage which suggests in figure and with fine harmony the duty as well as the delight of every reader of Milton's poetry. "I shall . . . straight conduct you to a hill-side," writes Milton to Master Hartlib, "where I will point you out the right path of a virtuous and noble education, laborious indeed at the first ascent, but also so smooth, so green, so full of goodly prospect and melodious sounds, that the harp of Orpheus was not more charming." With the reader of Milton, in like manner, the effort, laborious though it be, must ever precede the pleasure. Every line, every word of Milton's poetry has its meaning, and very often diligent search must be made for it; but it is nevertheless true that he who gives his days and nights to the search for this meaning, and finds it, wins for himself a culture scarcely less precious than Milton's own "virtuous and noble education."

Since so much has been written about Milton, and that, too, so ably, it seemed wiser to give in the Introduction to the present volume the best of what has been written by some of the more modern critics about the poems here edited rather than to attempt a criticism which could hardly hope to equal, much less to better, what has already been so admirably done. Furthermore, the divergence of views expressed by the critics here quoted will give the student abundant opportunity for discussion, and thereby lead to the formation of opinions more just than could possibly result from the perusal of any one man's single criticism.

The text of the poems is taken from Masson's library edition of Milton's poetical works. Here, as in the case of the selections printed in the Introduction, the reprint is as exact as it was possible to make it.

The Notes, as must be the case where serious study is to be made of poems whose lines have been so much fought over by scholars as these of Milton, are necessarily rather full. Several important interpretations are sometimes given to a single passage.

The necessity the student is thus put to in choosing the most reasonable of these — and it is the business of the teacher to see that he has good reasons for his preference — ought to lead to clear thinking. The study of parallel passages should be left ordinarily to the maturer work of the college, but in the case of Milton some work of this sort is absolutely essential to an appreciation of his genius. Some limit needs to be set, however, and hence all parallel passages in works later than Milton's time, with two or three exceptions, are rigidly excluded, while those in works before his time are given only where the resemblance is so close as to make it probable that they were actually suggestive to him. Passages in the Bible, in Shakspere, and in Milton's other poems are merely cited, it being supposed that every student has at hand a Bible and the works of Milton and Shakspere. These passages should in every case be looked up, both for the light they will throw upon the text and for the familiarity this sort of reference will breed with three of the world's great books. Questions and problems, such as the editor's experience in teaching High School students has shown him can be profitably set for independent study, are dispersed throughout the Notes.

The obligations of the editor are many. In the Notes use has been made of all the important editions of Milton's works, from Newton's to the present time, and with the exception of the matter taken from the editions of Warton and Keightley, to which the editor unfortunately did not have access, all quotations and citations are made at first hand. In the case of the exceptions, the editor has consulted such reliable sources, usually indicated in the Notes, that it is hoped no inaccuracy has resulted. Credit has everywhere been freely given for all matter which did not seem common property. To the Macmillan Company the editor is indebted for permission to use Masson's text and three of the selections in the Introduction. For other copyrighted material in the Introduction he is indebted to Harper & Brothers, to Longmans, Green & Co., to Walter Scott, to D. Appleton & Co., and to Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co. Prof. Albert E. Jack of Lake Forest University offered a number of suggestions, which have been made use of in the Notes.

T. F. H.

Stanford University, California,
October 16, 1899.

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# INTRODUCTION.

## I. CRITICAL COMMENTS.

### WORDSWORTH'S SONNET TO MILTON.[1]

MILTON! thou should'st be living at this hour:
England hath need of thee: she is a fen
Of stagnant waters: altar, sword, and pen,
Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,
Have forfeited their ancient English dower
Of inward happiness. We are selfish men;
Oh! raise us up, return to us again;
And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.
Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart:
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea:
Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,
So didst thou travel on life's common way,
In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart
The lowliest duties on herself did lay.

[Brooke, *English Literature*, pp. 161–168.[2]]

John Milton was the last of the Elizabethans, and, except Shakespeare, far the greatest of them all. Born

[1] This, Milton's own *On the Late Massacre in Piedmont*, and Keats's *On First Looking into Chapman's Homer* are among the best sonnets in our language. For some comments on the first line of the present sonnet, see the introductory essay in Ernest Myers's *Selected Prose Writings of John Milton*.

[2] For some strictures on Brooke's criticism as it was *originally* published, see Matthew Arnold's essay entitled *A Guide to English Literature*.

in 1608, in Bread Street (close by the Mermaid Tavern), he may have seen Shakespeare, for he remained till he was sixteen in London. His literary life may be said to begin with his entrance into Cambridge, in 1625, the year of the accession of Charles I. Nicknamed the "Lady of Christ's" from his beauty, delicate taste, and moral life, he soon attained a reputation by his Latin poems and discourses, and by his English poems which revealed as clear and original a genius as that of Chaucer and Spenser. Of Milton even more than of the two others, it may be said that he was "whole in himself, and owed to none." The *Ode to the Nativity*, 1629, the third poem he composed, while it went back to the Elizabethan age in beauty, in instinctive fire, went forward into a new world of art, the world where the architecture of the lyric is finished with majesty and music. The next year heard the noble sounding strains of *At a Solemn Music;* and the sonnet, *On Attaining the Age of Twenty-three*, reveals in dignified beauty that intense personality which lives, like a force, through every line he wrote. He left the university in 1632, and went to live at Horton, near Windsor, where he spent five years, steadily reading the Greek and Latin writers, and amusing himself with mathematics and music. Poetry was not neglected. The *Allegro* and *Penseroso* were written in 1633 and probably the *Arcades; Comus* was acted in 1634, and *Lycidas* composed in 1637. They prove that though Milton was Puritan in heart his Puritanism was of that earlier type which disdained neither the arts nor letters. But they represent a growing revolt from the Court and the Church. The *Penseroso* prefers the contemplative life to the mirthful, and *Comus*, though a masque, rose into a celestial poem to the glory of temperance, and under its allegory attacked the Court. Three years later, *Lycidas* interrupts its exqui-

site stream of poetry with a fierce and resolute onset on the greedy shepherds of the Church. Milton had taken his Presbyterian bent.

In 1638 he went to Italy, the second home of so many of the English poets, visited Florence where he saw Galileo, and then passed on to Rome. At Naples he heard the sad news of civil war, which determined him to return; "inasmuch as I thought it base to be traveling at my ease for amusement, while my fellow-countrymen at home were fighting for liberty." At the meeting of the Long Parliament we find him in a house in Aldersgate, where he lived till 1645. He had projected while abroad a great epic poem on the subject of Arthur, but in London his mind changed, and among a number of subjects, tended at last to *Paradise Lost*, which he meant to throw into the form of a Greek Tragedy with lyrics and choruses.

Suddenly his whole life changed, and for twenty years — 1640–60 — he was carried out of art into politics, out of poetry into prose. Most of the *Sonnets*, however, belong to this time. Stately, rugged, or graceful, as he pleased to make them, some with the solemn grandeur of Hebrew psalms, others having the classic ease of Horace, some of his own grave tenderness, they are true, unlike those of Shakespeare and Spenser, to the correct form of this difficult kind of poetry. But they were all he could now do of his true work. Before the Civil War began in 1642, he had written five vigorous pamphlets against Episcopacy. Six more pamphlets appeared in the next two years. One of these was the *Areopagitica; or, Speech for the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing*, 1644, a bold and eloquent attack on the censorship of the press by the Presbyterians. Another, remarkable, like the *Areopagitica*, for its finer prose, was a tract *On Education*. The four pamphlets in which he advo-

cated conditional divorce made him still more the horror of the Presbyterians. In 1646 he published his poems, and in that year the sonnet *On the Forcers of Conscience* shows that he had wholly ceased to be Presbyterian. His political pamphlets begin when his *Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* defended in 1649 the execution of the king. The *Eikonoclastes* answered the *Eikon Basilike* (a portraiture of the sufferings of the king); and his famous Latin *Defence for the People of England*, 1651, replied to Salmasius's *Defence of Charles I.*, and inflicted so pitiless a lashing on the great Leyden scholar that Milton's fame went over the whole of Europe. In the next year he wholly lost his sight. But he continued his work (being Latin secretary since 1649) when Cromwell was made Protector, and wrote another *Defence for the English People*, 1654, and a further *Defence of Himself* against scurrilous charges. This closed the controversy in 1655. In the last year of the Protector's life he began the *Paradise Lost*, but the death of Cromwell threw him back into politics, and three more pamphlets on the questions of a Free Church and a free Commonwealth were useless to prevent the Restoration. It was a wonder he was not put to death in 1660, and he was in hiding and also in custody for a time. At last he settled in a house near Bunhill Fields. It was here that *Paradise Lost* was finished, before the end of 1665, and then published in 1667.

We may regret that Milton was shut away from his art during twenty years of controversy. But it may be that the poems he wrote when the great cause he fought for had closed in seeming defeat but real victory, gained from its solemn issues and from the moral grandeur with which he wrought for its ends their majestic movement, their grand style, and their grave beauty. During the struggle he had

never forgotten his art. "I may one day hope," he said, speaking of his youthful studies, "to have ye again, in a still time, when there shall be no chiding. Not in these Noises," and the saying strikes the note of calm sublimity which is kept in *Paradise Lost.*

As we read the great epic, we feel that the lightness of heart of the *Allegro*, that even the quiet classic philosophy of the *Comus*, are gone. The beauty of the poem is like that of a stately temple, which, vast in conception, is involved in detail. The style is the greatest in the whole range of English poetry. Milton's intellectual force supports and condenses his imaginative force, and his art is almost too conscious of itself. Sublimity is its essential difference. The subject is one phase of the great and universal subject of high poetic thought and passion, that struggle of Light with Darkness, of Evil with Good, which, arising in a hundred myths, keeps its undying attraction to the present day. But its great difficulty in his case was that he was obliged to interest us, for a great part of the poem, in two persons, who, being innocent, were without any such play of human passion and trouble as we find in Œdipus, Æneas, Hamlet, or Alceste. In the noble art with which this is done Milton is supreme. The interest of the story collects at first round the character of Satan, but he grows meaner as the poem develops, and his second degradation after he has destroyed innocence is one of the finest and most consistent motives in the poem. This at once disposes of the view that Milton meant Satan to be the hero of the epic. His hero is Man. The deep tenderness of Milton, his love of beauty, the passionate fitness of his words to his work, his religious depth, fill the scenes in which he paints Paradise, our parents and their fall, and at last all thought and emotion center round Adam and Eve,

until the closing lines leave us with their lonely image on our minds. In every part of the poem, in every character in it, as indeed in all his poems, Milton's intense individuality appears. It is a pleasure to find it. The egotism of such a man, said Coleridge, is a revelation of spirit.

*Paradise Lost* was followed by *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes*, published together in 1671. *Paradise Regained* opens with the journey of Christ into the wilderness after his baptism, and its four books describe the temptation of Christ by Satan, and the answers and victory of the Redeemer. The speeches in it overwhelm the action, and their learned argument is only relieved by a few descriptions; but these, as in that of Athens, are done with Milton's highest power. Its solemn beauty of quietude, and a more severe style than that of *Paradise Lost*, make us feel in it that Milton has grown older.

In *Samson Agonistes* the style is still severer, even to the verge of a harshness which the sublimity alone tends to modify. It is a choral drama, after the Greek model. Samson in his blindness is described, is called on to make sport for the Philistines, and overthrows them in the end. Samson represents the fallen Puritan cause, and Samson's victorious death Milton's hopes for the final triumph of that cause. The poem has all the grandeur of the last words of a great man in whom there was now "calm of mind, all passion spent." It is also the last word of the music of the Elizabethan drama long after its notes seemed hushed, and its deep sound is strange in the midst of the shallow noise of the Restoration. Soon afterwards, November, 1674, blind and old and fallen on evil days, Milton died; but neither blindness, old age, nor evil days could lessen the inward light, nor impair the imaginative power with which he sang, it seemed with the angels, the

"undisturbed song of pure concent," until he joined himself, at last, with those "just spirits who wear victorious palms."

To the greatness of the artist Milton joined the majesty of a clear and lofty character. His poetic style was as stately as his character, and proceeded from it. Living at a time when criticism began to purify the verse of England, and being himself well acquainted with the great classical models, his work is seldom weakened by the false conceits and the intemperance of the Elizabethan writers, and yet is as imaginative as theirs, and as various. He has not their naturalness, nor all their intensity, but he has a larger grace, a lovelier colour, a closer eye for nature, a more finished art, and a sublime dignity they did not possess. All the kinds of poetry which he touched he touched with the ease of great strength, and with so much energy, that they became new in his hands. He put a fresh life into the masque, the sonnet, the elegy, the descriptive lyric, the song, the choral drama; and he created the epic in England. The lighter love poem he never wrote, and we are grateful that he kept his coarse satirical power apart from his poetry. In some points he was untrue to his descent from the Elizabethans, for he had no dramatic faculty, and he had no humour. He summed up in himself the learned and artistic influences of the English Renaissance, and handed them on to us. His taste was as severe, his verse as polished, his method and language as strict as those of the school of Dryden and Pope that grew up when he was old. A literary past and present thus met in him, nor did he fail, like all the greatest men, to make a cast into the future. He established the poetry of pure natural description. Lastly, he did not represent in any way the England that followed the Stuarts, but he did rep-

resent Puritan England, and the whole spirit of Puritanism from its cradle to its grave.

[Pattison, *Milton*, pp. 19, 24–29.]

The fame of the author of *Paradise Lost* has over-shadowed that of the author of *L'Allegro*, *Il Penseroso*, and *Lycidas*. Yet had *Paradise Lost* never been written, these three poems, with *Comus*, would have sufficed to place their author in a class apart, and above all those who had used the English language for poetical purposes before him. . . .

* * * * *

. . . a naturalist is at once aware that Milton had neither the eye nor the ear of a naturalist. At no time, even before his loss of sight, was he an exact observer of natural objects. It may be that he knew a skylark from a red-breast, and did not confound the dog-rose with the honey-suckle. But I am sure that he had never acquired that interest in nature's things and ways which leads to close and loving watching of them. He had not that sense of out-door nature, empirical and not scientific, which endows the *Angler* of his cotemporary Walton with his enduring charm, and which is to be acquired only by living in the open country in childhood. Milton is not a man of the fields, but of books. His life is in his study, and when he steps abroad into the air he carries his study thoughts with him. He does look at nature, but he sees her through books. Natural impressions are received from without, but always in those forms of beautiful speech in which the poets of all ages have clothed them. His epithets are not, like the epithets of the school of Dryden and Pope, culled from the *Gradus ad Parnassum;* they are expressive of some reality, but it is of a real emotion in the spectator's

soul, not of any quality detected by keen insight in the objects themselves. This emotion Milton's art stamps with an epithet which shall convey the added charm of classical reminiscence. When, e.g., he speaks of "the wand'ring moon," the original significance of the epithet comes home to the scholarly reader with the enhanced effect of its association with the "errantem lunam" of Horace. Nor because it is adopted from Horace has the epithet here the second-hand effect of a copy. If Milton sees nature through books, he still sees it.

> "To behold the wand'ring moon,
> Riding near her highest noon,
> Like one that had been led astray,
> Through the heaven's wide pathless way,
> And oft, as if her head she bow'd,
> Stooping through a fleecy cloud."

No allegation that "wand'ring moon" is borrowed from Horace can hide from us that Milton, though he remembered Horace, had watched the phenomenon with a feeling so intense that he projected his own soul's throb into the object before him, and named it with what Thomson calls "recollected love."

Milton's attitude toward nature is not that of a scientific naturalist, nor even that of a close observer. It is that of a poet who feels its total influence too powerfully to dissect it. If, as I have said, Milton reads books first and nature afterwards, it is not to test nature by his books, but to learn from both. He is learning, not books, but from books. All he reads, sees, hears, is to him but nutriment for the soul. He is making himself. Man is to him the highest object; nature is subordinate to man, not only in its more vulgar uses, but as an excitant of fine emotion.

He is not concerned to register the facts and phenomena of nature, but to convey the impression they make on a sensitive soul. The external forms of things are to be presented to us as transformed through the heart and mind of the poet. The moon is endowed with life and will, "stooping," "riding," "wand'ring," "bowing her head," not as a frigid personification, and because the ancient poets so personified her, but by communication to her of the intense agitation which the nocturnal spectacle rouses in the poet's own breast.

* * * * *

In Milton, nature is not put forward as the poet's theme. His theme is man, in the two contrasted moods of joyous emotion or grave reflection. The shifting scenery ministers to the varying mood. Thomson, in the *Seasons* (1726), sets himself to render natural phenomena as they truly are. He has left us a vivid presentation in gorgeous language of the naturalistic calendar of the changing year. Milton, in these two idylls, has recorded a day of twenty-four hours. But he has not registered the phenomena; he places us at the standpoint of the man before whom they deploy. And the man, joyous or melancholy, is not a bare spectator of them; he is the student, compounded of sensibility and intelligence, of whom we are not told that he saw so and so, or that he felt so, but with whom we are made copartners of his thoughts and feeling. Description melts into emotion, and contemplation bodies itself in imagery. All the charm of rural life is there, but it is not tendered to us in the form of a landscape; the scenery is subordinated to the human figure in the center.

These two short idylls are marked by a gladsome spontaneity which never came to Milton again. The delicate fancy and feeling which play about *L'Allegro* and *Il*

*Penseroso* never reappear, and form a strong contrast to the austere imaginings of his later poetical period. These two poems have the freedom and frolic, the natural grace of movement, the improvisation, of the best Elizabethan examples, while both thoughts and words are under a strict economy unknown to the diffuse exuberance of the Spenserians.

In *Lycidas* (1637) we have reached the high-water mark of English poesy and of Milton's own production. A period of a century and a half was to elapse before poetry in England seemed, in Wordsworth's *Ode on Immortality* (1807), to be rising again toward the level of inspiration which it had once attained in *Lycidas*. And in the development of the Miltonic genius this wonderful dirge marks the culminating point. As the twin idylls of 1632 show a great advance upon the *Ode on the Nativity* (1629), the growth of the poetic mind during the five years which follow 1632 is registered in *Lycidas*. Like the *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*, *Lycidas* is laid out on the lines of the accepted pastoral fiction; like them it offers exquisite touches of idealised rural life. But *Lycidas* opens up a deeper vein of feeling, a patriot passion so vehement and dangerous that, like that which stirred the Hebrew prophet, it is compelled to veil itself from power, or from sympathy, in utterance made purposely enigmatical. The passage which begins "Last came and last did go" raises in us a thrill of awe-struck expectation which I can only compare with that excited by the Cassandra of Æschylus's *Agamemnon*. For the reader to feel this, he must have present in memory the circumstances of England in 1637. He must place himself as far as possible in the situation of a cotemporary. The study of Milton's poetry compels the study of his time; and Professor Masson's six volumes are not too

much to enable us to understand that there were real causes for the intense passion which glows underneath the poet's words — a passion which unexplained would be thought to be intrusive.

The historical exposition must be gathered from the English history of the period, which may be read in Professor Masson's excellent summary. All I desire to point out here is, that in *Lycidas* Milton's original picturesque vein is for the first time crossed with one of quite another sort, stern, determined, obscurely indicative of suppressed passion, and the resolution to do or die. The fanaticism of the covenanter and the sad grace of Petrarch seem to meet in Milton's monody. Yet these opposites, instead of neutralising each other, are blended into one harmonious whole by the presiding, but invisible, genius of the poet. The conflict between the old cavalier world — the years of gaiety and festivity of a splendid and pleasure-loving court, and the new Puritan world into which love and pleasure were not to enter — this conflict which was commencing in the social life of England, is also begun in Milton's own breast, and is reflected in *Lycidas*.

"For we were nurs'd upon the self-same hill."

Here is the sweet mournfulness of the Spenserian time, upon whose joys Death is the only intruder. Pass onward a little, and you are in presence of the tremendous

"Two-handed engine at the door,"

the terror of which is enhanced by its obscurity. We are very sure that the avenger is there, though we know not who he is. In these thirty lines we have the preluding mutterings of the storm which was to sweep away mask and revel and song, to inhibit the drama, and suppress

poetry. In the earlier poems Milton's muse has sung in the tones of the age that is passing away; except in his austere chastity, a cavalier. Though even in *L'Allegro* Dr. Johnson truly detects "some melancholy in his mirth." In *Lycidas*, for a moment, the tones of both ages, the past and the coming, are combined, and then Milton leaves behind him forever the golden age, and one half of his poetic genius. He never fulfilled the promise with which *Lycidas* concludes, "To-morrow to fresh fields and pastures new."

[Garnett, *Life of Milton*, pp. 49–54.]

The "Penseroso" and the "Allegro," notwithstanding that each piece is the antithesis of the other, are complementary rather than contrary, and may be, in a sense, regarded as one poem, whose theme is the praise of the reasonable life. It resembles one of those pictures in which the effect is gained by contrasted masses of light and shade, but each is more nicely mellowed and interfused with the qualities of the other than it lies within the resources of pictorial skill to effect. Mirth has an undertone of gravity, and melancholy of cheerfulness. There is no antagonism between the states of mind depicted; and no rational lover, whether of contemplation or of recreation, would find any difficulty in combining the two. The limpidity of the diction is even more striking than its beauty. Never were ideas of such dignity embodied in verse so easy and familiar, and with such apparent absence of effort. The landscape-painting is that of the seventeenth century, absolutely true in broad effects, sometimes ill-defined and even inaccurate in minute details. Some of these blemishes are terrible in nineteenth-century eyes, accustomed to the photography of our Brownings and

Patmores. Milton would probably have made light of them, and perhaps we owe him some thanks for thus practically refuting the heresy that inspiration implies infallibility. Yet the poetry of his blindness abounds with proof that he had made excellent use of his eyes while he had them, and no part of his poetry wants instances of subtle and delicate observation worthy of the most scrutinizing modern: —

> "Thee, chantress, oft the woods among,
> I woo, to hear thy evensong;
> And, missing thee, I walk unseen
> On the dry, smooth-shaven green."

"The song of the nightingale," remarks Peacock, "ceases about the time the grass is mown." The charm, however, is less in such detached beauties, however exquisite, than in the condensed opulence — "every epithet a text for a canto," says Macaulay — and in the general impression of "plain living and high thinking," pursued in the midst of every charm of nature and every refinement of culture, combining the ideal of Horton with the ideal of Cambridge.

"Lycidas" is far more boldly conventional, not merely in the treatment of landscape, but in the general conception and machinery. An initial effort of the imagination is required to feel with the poet; it is not wonderful that no such wing bore up the solid Johnson. Talk of Milton and his fellow-collegian as shepherds! "We know that they never drove afield, and that they had no flocks to batten." There is, in fact, according to Johnson, neither nature nor truth nor art nor pathos in the poem, for all these things are inconsistent with the introduction of a shepherd of souls in the character of a shepherd of sheep. A nineteenth-century reader, it may be hoped, finds no more difficulty in idealizing Edward King as a shepherd

than in personifying the ocean calm as "sleek Panope and all her sisters," which, to be sure, may have been a trouble to Johnson. If, however, Johnson is deplorably prosaic, neither can we agree with Pattison that "in 'Lycidas' we have reached the high-water mark of English Poesy and of Milton's own production." Its innumerable beauties are rather exquisite than magnificent. It is an elegy, and cannot, therefore, rank as high as an equally consummate example of epic, lyric, or dramatic art. Even as elegy it is surpassed by the other great English masterpiece, "Adonais," in fire and grandeur. There is no incongruity in "Adonais" like the introduction of the "pilot of the Galilean lake"; its invective and indignation pour naturally out of the subject; their expression is not, as in "Lycidas," a splendid excrescence. There is no such example of sustained eloquence in "Lycidas" as the seven concluding stanzas of "Adonais" beginning, "Go thou to Rome." But the balance is redressed by the fact that the beauties of "Adonais" are mostly of the imitable sort, and those of "Lycidas" of the inimitable. Shelley's eloquence is even too splendid for elegy. It wants the dainty thrills and tremors of subtle versification, and the witcheries of verbal magic in which "Lycidas" is so rich — "the opening eyelids of the morn;" "smooth-sliding Mincius, crowned with vocal reeds;" Camus's garment, "inwrought with figures dim;" "the great vision of the guarded mount;" "the tender stops of various quills;" "with eager thought warbling his Doric lay." It will be noticed that these exquisite phrases have little to do with Lycidas himself, and it is a fact not to be ignored, that though Milton and Shelley doubtless felt more deeply than Dryden when he composed his scarcely inferior threnody on Anne Killegrew, whom he had never seen, both might have found

subjects of grief that touched them more nearly. Shelley tells us frankly that "in another's woe he wept his own." We cannot doubt of whom Milton was thinking when he wrote [*Lycidas*, 70–84]. . . .

"Comus," the richest fruit of Milton's early genius, is the epitome of the man at the age at which he wrote it. It bespeaks the scholar and idealist, whose sacred enthusiasm is in some danger of contracting a taint of pedantry for want of acquaintance with men and affairs. The Elder Brother is a prig, and his dialogues with his junior reveal the same solemn insensibility to the humorous which characterizes the kindred genius of Wordsworth, and would have provoked the kindly smile of Shakespeare. It is singular to find the inevitable flaw of "Paradise Lost" prefigured here, and the wicked enchanter made the real hero of the piece. These defects are interesting, because they represent the nature of Milton as it was then, noble and disinterested to the height of imagination, but self-assertive, unmellowed, angular. They disappear entirely when he expatiates in the regions of exalted fancy, as in the introductory discourse of the Spirit, and the invocation to Sabrina. They recur when he moralizes; and his morality is too interwoven with the texture of his piece to be other than obtrusive. He fatigues with virtue, as Lucan fatigues with liberty; in both instances the scarcely avoidable error of a young preacher. What glorious morality it is no one need be told; nor is there any poem in the language where beauties of thought, diction, and description spring up more thickly than in "Comus." No drama out of Shakespeare has furnished such a number of the noblest familiar quotations. It is, indeed, true that many of these jewels are fetched from the mines of other poets: great as Milton's obligations to Nature were, his obligations

to books were greater. But he has made all his own by the alchemy of his genius, and borrows little but to improve. . . .

[Brooke, *Milton*, pp. 18–19, 22–24, 26–27.]

The *Allegro* and *Penseroso*, the resemblances to which in previous writers, as in Burton, and Beaumont and Fletcher, only prove that Milton had read English literature, and could better what he borrowed if he borrowed it — represent Nature, and Man, and Art as they appear to a man filled with an imaginative joy and an imaginative sadness. The *Allegro*, which begins with the early morning and ends at night, is paralleled thought by thought, scene by scene, with the *Penseroso*, which begins with the late evening and ends towards the noon of the next day. But the *Penseroso* closes with the wish — which, not paralleled in the *Allegro*, makes us know that Milton preferred the pensive to the mirthful temper — That he may live on into old age, the contemplative life,

> "Till old experience do attain,
> To something like prophetic strain."

Both poems are ushered in with a stately introduction, and change to a quicker and lighter measure, of which the scheme appears to be trochaic, though iambics are often introduced and especially in the *Penseroso*. The greatest pains is bestowed upon the rhythm. There is nothing hazarded, nothing careless, yet the poems move, it seems, with careless grace. They are a landmark in the metrical art of poetry, and they are conscious of their art throughout.

The words are arranged and chosen to imitate or suggest the thing described: alliteration is used to heighten the

effect, but much more sparingly than by the earlier men, such as his "original," Spenser.[1] Throughout the *Allegro* the verse frequently rushes as if borne along by very joy; its character is swiftness and smoothness. Few if any pauses occur in the midst of the lines. Throughout the *Penseroso* the verse frequently pauses in the midst of the lines. It rests, like a pensive man who, walking, stops to think, and its movement is slow, even stately.

Both poems are full of natural description. But it is neither the description which imposes one's own feeling on nature, nor the moralising description of Gray, nor does it even resemble that description which in Shelley and Wordsworth was built on the thought that Nature was alive and man's companion. It is the pure description of things seen, seen not necessarily through the poet's own mood, but always in direct relation to Man and to the special mood of man's mind which Milton has chosen as the groundwork for each poem.

The allusiveness of the poems — and extreme allusiveness is a characteristic mark, and often a fault, of the poetry of Milton — pleases by the claim it makes on study. The extreme simplicity of the two motives — and Milton, however his poems are involved, has always a simple motive — makes these poems simple, and this is one reason why children as well as others understand and have pleasure in them. The picturesqueness of the scenes, the clearcut and vivid outline of the things described — and this also is a constant excellence of Milton, though he sometimes wilfully spoils it by digression, — is also a source of delight to young and old: while the work of the higher imagination is felt as a shaping power in the poems, as the Orphean

[1] "Milton has acknowledged to me," says Dryden, "that Spenser was his original." — Brooke.

music which has harmonized and built them into that unity which is the highest and last demand of Art.

* * * * *

. . . It [Comus] settled Milton's rank as a poet among all men capable of judging. Sir Henry Wotton's voice was, we may be sure, the voice of all men of culture: — "A dainty piece of entertainment, wherein I should much commend the tragical part if the lyrical did not ravish me with a certain Doric delicacy in your songs and odes, whereunto I must plainly confess to have seen yet nothing parallel in our language." The phrase Doric delicacy is not ill-said; but it is not in the lyrics, which are excelled by many of the Elizabethan lyrics, but in the full-weighted dignity of the blank verse that the poem was then unparalleled. Moreover it was marked by a greater grandeur of style and thought, by a graver beauty, and by a more exercised and self-conscious art than any poem of its character which England had as yet known. It belonged to the Elizabethan spirit, but it went beyond it and made a new departure for English poetry. The way it showed could not be walked in by the men of the Restoration and the Revolution. It was before its time; but that is at once the good and the evil fortune of a great genius.

Johnson's sturdy criticism on it has much force and is admirably written; but in condemning it as a drama, he is carried beyond good sense to lose sight of its beauty as a poem. Moreover his arrows do not hit the target. *Comus* is not a regular drama, but a masque, and a masque obeys laws distinct from those of the regular drama. The masque depends for success not only on the poetry, which here is splendid, but also and chiefly on its occasion, and away

from the occasion its dramatic fitness cannot be judged. It depends also on the decoration and music, and these are so knit to the occasion that, even when they are reproduced, they have not the same value as at the time they were first made. No one can judge how far *Comus* contradicts Johnson's judgment of its want of interest as a dramatic representation, unless he can recreate in his mind not only the scene, and the "occasion," and all its interests, but also all the feelings of the spectators, and the thought of the story in their minds to which the masque spoke; and this was work of which Johnson at least seems incapable. *Comus* was written for such an occasion, and only in the atmosphere of the moment can its dramatic merits be judged.

Still that *Comus* soars beyond the occasion is plain enough. It displaced itself as a masque to rise into a poem to the glory and victory of virtue. And its virtue lies in the mastery of the righteous will over sense and appetite. It is a song to Temperance as the ground of freedom, to temperance as the guard of all the virtues, to beauty as secured by temperance, and its central point and climax is in the pleading of these motives by the Lady against their opposites in the mouth of the Lord of sensual Revel.

It is moreover raised above an ethical poem by its imaginative form and power; and its literary worth enables us to consider it, if we choose, apart from its dramatic form. Its imagination, however, sinks at times, and one can scarcely explain this otherwise than by saying that the Elizabethan habit of fantastic metaphor clung to Milton at this time. When he does fall, the fall is made more remarkable by the soaring strength of his loftier flight and by the majesty of the verse. Nothing can be worse in conception than the comparison of night to a thief who

shuts up, for the sake of his felony, the stars whose lamps burn everlasting oil, in his dark lantern. The better it is carried out and the finer the verse, the worse it is. And yet it is instantly followed by the great passage about the fears of night, the fantasies and airy tongues that syllable men's names, and by the glorious appeal to conscience, faith, and God, followed in its turn by the fantastic conceit of the cloud that turns out its silver lining on the night. This is Elizabethan weakness and strength, the mixture of gold and clay, the want of that art-sensitiveness which feels the absurd: and Milton, even in *Paradise Lost*, when he had got further from his originals, falls into it not unfrequently. It is a fault which runs through a good deal of his earlier work, it is more seen in *Comus* than elsewhere; but it was the fault of that poetic age.

* * * * *

It [*Lycidas*] is pastoral, and in the form of other pastorals; with its introduction and its epilogue, and between them the monody of the shepherd who has lost his friend. Under the guise of one shepherd mourning another, all Milton's relations with Edward King are expressed, and all his thoughts about his character and genius; and the poem, to be justly judged, must be read with the conditions of the pastoral as a form of verse present to the mind. That is enough to dispose of Johnson's unfavourable criticism, which quarrels with the poem for its want of passion and want of nature, and for its improbability. It is not a poem of passionate sorrow, but of admiration and regret expressed with careful art and in a special artistic form; and the classical allusions and shepherd images and the rest are the necessary drapery of the pastoral, the art of which, and the due keeping to form in

which, are as important to Milton, and perhaps more so, than his regret. We are made aware of this when we find Milton twice checking himself in the conduct of the poem for having gone beyond the limits of the pastoral.

The metrical structure, which is partly borrowed from Italian models, is as carefully wrought as the rest, and harmonized to the thoughts. "Milton's ear was a good second to his imagination." *Lycidas* appeals not only to the imagination, but to the educated imagination. There is no ebb and flow of poetical power as in *Comus;* it is an advance on all his previous work, and it fitly closes the poetic labour of his youth. It is needless to analyse it, and all criticism is weaker than the poem itself. Yet we may say that one of its strange charms is its solemn undertone rising like a religious chaunt through the elegiac musick; the sense of a stern national crisis in the midst of its pastoral mourning; the sense of Milton's grave force of character among the flowers and fancies of the poem; the sense of the Christian religion pervading the classical imagery. We might say that these things are ill-fitted to each other. So they would be, were not the art so fine and the poetry so over-mastering; were they not fused together by genius into a whole so that the unfitness itself becomes fascination.[1]

[Saintsbury, *Elizabethan Literature*, pp. 319–322.]

This body of work, then, is marked by two qualities: an extraordinary degree of poetic merit, and a still more extraordinary originality of poetic kind. Although Milton is always Milton, it would be difficult to find in another

[1] See also pp. 27–29, where Brooke gives his observations on the political and social aspects of Milton's early poetry.

writer five poems, or (taking the *Allegro* and its companion together) four, so different from each other and yet of such high merit. And it would be still more difficult to find poems so independent in their excellence. Neither the influence of Johnson nor the influence of Donne — the two poetical influences in the air at the time, and the latter especially strong at Cambridge — produced even the faintest effect on Milton. We know from his own words, and should have known even if he had not mentioned it, that Shakespere and Spenser were his favourite studies in English; yet, save in mere scattered phrases, none of these poems owes anything to either. He has teachers but no models; masters, but only in the way of learning how to do, not what to do. The "certain vital marks," of which he somewhat arrogantly speaks, are indeed there. . . . As for *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*, who shall praise them fitly? They are among the few things about which there is no difference of opinion, which are as delightful to childhood as to criticism, to youth as to age. To dwell on their technical excellences (the chief of which is the unerring precision with which the catalectic and acatalectic lines are arranged and interchanged) has a certain air of impertinence about it. Even a critical King Alfonso El Sabio could hardly think it possible that Milton might have taken a hint here, although some persons have, it seems, been disturbed because skylarks do not come to the window, just as others are troubled because the flowers in *Lycidas* do not grow at the same time, and because they think they could see stars through the "starproof" trees of *Arcades*.

. . . But it is in *Comus* that, if I have any skill of criticism, Milton's poetical power is at its greatest height. Those who judge poetry on the ground of bulk, or of origi-

nality of theme, or of anything else extra-poetical, — much more those (the greater number) who simply vary transmitted ideas, — may be scandalized at this assertion, but that will hardly matter much. And indeed the indebtedness of *Comus* in point of subject (it is probably limited to the Odyssey, which is public property, and to George Peele's *Old Wives' Tale*, which gave little but a few hints of story) is scarcely greater than that of *Paradise Lost;* while the form of the drama, a kind nearly as venerable and majestic as that of the epic, is completely filled. And in *Comus* there is none of the stiffness, none of the *longueurs*, none of the almost ludicrous want of humour, which mar the larger poem. Humour indeed was what Milton always lacked; had he had it, Shakespere himself might hardly have been greater. The plan is not really more artificial than that of the epic; though in the latter case it is masked to us by the scale, by the grandeur of the personages, and by the familiarity of the images to all men who have been brought up on the Bible. The versification, as even Johnson saw, is the versification of *Paradise Lost*, and to my fancy at any rate it has a spring, a variety, a sweep and rush of genius, which are but rarely present later. As for its beauty in parts, *quis vituperavit?* It is impossible to single out passages, for the whole is golden. The entering address of Comus, the song "Sweet Echo," the descriptive speech of the Spirit, and the magnificent eulogy of the "sun-clad power of chastity," would be the most beautiful things where all is beautiful, if the unapproachable "Sabrina fair" did not come later, and were not sustained before and after, for nearly two hundred lines of pure nectar. If poetry could be taught by the reading of it, then indeed the critic's advice to a poet might be limited to this: "Give your days and nights to the reading of *Comus*."

[William Hazlitt, *Lectures on the English Poets*, Appendix, p. 201 *et seq.*[1]]

Of all Milton's smaller poems, *Lycidas* is the greatest favourite with me. I cannot agree to the charge which Dr. Johnson has brought against it of pedantry and want of feeling. It is the fine emanation of classical sentiment in a youthful scholar — 'most musical, most melancholy.' A certain tender gloom overspreads it, a wayward abstraction, a forgetfulness of his subject in the serious reflections that arise out of it. The gusts of passion come and go like the sounds of music borne on the wind. The loss of the friend whose death he laments seems to have recalled, with double force, the reality of those speculations which they had indulged together; we are transported to classic ground, and a mysterious strain steals responsive on the ear, while we listen to the poet,

'With eager thought warbling his Doric lay.'

I shall proceed to give a few passages at length in support of my opinion. The first I shall quote is as remarkable for the truth and sweetness of the natural descriptions as for the characteristic elegance of the allusions. [Lines 25–49 quoted.]

After the fine apostrophe on Fame which Phoebus is involved to utter, the poet proceeds: [Lines 85–99 quoted.] If this is art, it is perfect art; nor do we wish for anything better. The measure of the verse, the very sound of the names, would almost produce the effect here described. To ask the poet not to make use of such allusions as these is to ask the painter not to dip in the colours of the rainbow, if he could. — In fact, it is the common cant of criticism to consider every allusion to the clas-

[1] New York, 1845. Wiley and Putnam.

sics, and particularly in a mind like Milton's, as pedantry and affectation. Habit is a second nature; and, in this sense, the pedantry (if it is to be so called) of the scholastic enthusiast, who is constantly referring to images of which his mind is full, is as graceful as it is natural. It is not affectation in him to recur to ideas and modes of expression with which he has the strongest associations, and in which he takes the greatest delight. Milton was as conversant with the world of genius before him as with the world of nature about him; the fables of the ancient mythology were as familiar to him as his dreams. To be a pedant is to see neither the beauties of nature nor of art. Milton saw both; and he made use of the one only to adorn and give interest to the other. He was a passionate admirer of nature; and, in a single couplet of his, describing the moon, —

'Like one that had been led astray
Through the heaven's wide pathless way,' —

there is more intense observation, and intense feeling of nature (as if he had gazed himself blind in looking at her,) than in twenty volumes of descriptive poetry. But he added in his own observation of nature the splendid fictions of ancient genius, enshrined her in the mysteries of ancient religion, and celebrated her with the pomp of ancient names.[1]

[Dowden, *Transcripts and Studies*, pp. 460–465, 473.]

. . . Milton, as an artist, works in the manner of an idealist. His starting-point is ordinarily an abstraction. Whereas with Bunyan abstract virtues and vices are per-

[1] Hazlitt continues with a rather fanciful defense of Milton's combination of heathen and Christian elements.

petually tending to become real persons, with Milton each real person tends to become the representative of an idea or a group, more or less complex, of ideas. . . .

*Comus* is the work of a youthful spirit, enamoured of its ideals of beauty and of virtue, zealous to exhibit the identity of moral loveliness with moral severity. The real incident from which the mask is said to have originated disengages itself, in the imagination of Milton, from the world of actual occurrences, and becomes an occasion for the dramatic display of his own poetical abstractions. The young English gentlemen cast off their identity and individuality, and appear in the elementary shapes of "First Brother" and "Second Brother." The Lady Alice rises into an ideal impersonation of virgin strength and virtue. The scene is earth, a wild wood; but earth, as in all the poems of Milton, with the heavens arching over it — a dim spot, in which men "strive to keep up a frail and feverish being" set below the "starry threshold of Jove's Court,"

> "Where those immortal shapes
> Of bright aerial spirits live inspher'd
> In regions mild of calm and serene air."

From its first scene to the last the drama is a representation of the trials, difficulties, and dangers to which moral purity is exposed in this world, and of the victory of the better principle in the soul, gained by strenuous human endeavour aided by the grace of God. In this spiritual warfare the powers of good and evil are arrayed against one another; upon this side the Lady, her brothers (types of human helpfulness weak in itself, and liable to go astray), and the supernatural powers auxiliar to virtue in heaven and in earth — the Attendant Spirit and the nymph Sabrina.

The enchanter Comus is son of Bacchus and Circe, and inheritor of twofold vice. If Milton had pictured the life of innocent mirth in *L'Allegro*, here was a picture to set beside the other, a vision of the genius of sensual indulgence. Yet Comus is inwardly, not outwardly foul; no grim monster like that which the medieval imagination conjured up to terrify the spirit and disgust the senses. The attempt of sin upon the soul as conceived by Milton is not the open and violent obsession of a brute power, but involves a cheat, an imposture. The soul is put upon its trial through the seduction of the senses and the lower parts of our nature. Flattering lies entice the ears of Eve; Christ is tried by false visions of power and glory, and beneficent rule; Samson is defrauded of his strength by deceitful blandishment. And in like manner Comus must needs possess a beauty of his own, such beauty as ensnares the eye untrained in the severe school of moral perfection. Correggio sought him as a favourite model, but not Michael Angelo. He is sensitive to rich forms and sweet sounds, graceful in oratory, possessed, like Satan, of high intellect, but intellect in the service of the senses; he surrounds himself with a world of art which lulls the soul into forgetfulness of its higher instincts and of duty; his palace is stately, and "set out with all manner of deliciousness."

Over against this potent enchanter stands the original figure of the Lady, who is stronger than he. Young men, themselves conscious of high powers, and who are more truly acquainted with admiration than with love, find the presence of strength in woman invincibly attractive. Shakspere, in his earlier dramatic period, delighted to represent such characters as Rosalind, and Beatrice, and Portia; characters at once stronger and weaker than his Imogens and Desdemonas, — stronger because more intel-

lectual, weaker because less harmoniously feminine. Shelley, who was never other than young, exhibited different types of heroic womanly nature, as conceived by him, in Cythna of *The Revolt of Islam*, and in Beatrice Cenci. Something of weakness belongs to the Lady of Milton's poem, because she is a woman, accustomed to the protection of others, tenderly nurtured, with a fair and gentle body; but when the hour of trial comes she shows herself strong in powers of judgment and of reasoning, strong in her spiritual nature, in her tenacity of moral truth, in her indignation against sin. Although alone, and encompassed by evil and danger, she is fearless, and so clear-sighted that the juggling practice of her antagonist is wholly ineffectual against her. There is much in the Lady which resembles the youthful Milton himself — he, the Lady of his college — and we may well believe that the great debate concerning temperance was not altogether dramatic (where, indeed, is Milton truly dramatic?), but was in part a record of passages in the poet's own spiritual history. Milton admired the Lady as he admired the ideal which he projected before him of himself. She is, indeed, too admirable to be an object of cherishing love. We could almost prolong her sufferings to draw a more complete enthusiasm from the sight of her heroic attitude.

The Lady is unsubdued, and indeed unsubduable, because her will remains her own, a citadel without a breach; but "her corporeal rind" is manacled, she is set in the enchanted chair and cannot leave it. . . . Meanwhile . . . the brothers wander in the wood. They are alike in being aimless and helpless; if they are distinguished from each other, it is only as "First Brother" and "Second Brother," and by one of the simple devices common to ideal artists — first brother is a philosopher and full of hope

and faith; second brother is more apprehensive, and less thoroughly grounded in ethics and metaphysics. The deliverance of their sister would be impossible but for supernatural interposition, the aid afforded by the Attendant Spirit from Jove's court. In other words, Divine Providence is asserted. Not without higher than human aid is the Lady rescued, and through the weakness of the mortal instruments of divine grace but half the intended work is accomplished. Comus escapes bearing his magic wand, to deceive other strayers in the wood, to work new enchantments, and swell his rout of ugly-headed followers.

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. . . A line will recapitulate the substance of this essay. Milton works from the starting-point of an idea, and two such ideas brought into being what he accomplished as a man and as an artist. His prose works, the outcome of his life of public action, have for their ideal centre a conception of human liberty. His poetical works, the outcome of his inner life, his life of artistic contemplation, are various renderings of one dominant idea — that the struggle for mastery between good and evil is the prime fact of life; and that a final victory of the righteous cause is assured by the existence of a divine order of the universe, which Milton knew by the name of "Providence."

[J. C. Shairp, *On Poetic Interpretation of Nature*, pp. 186–190.[1]]

When we pass from the images of Nature that abound in Chaucer and in Shakespeare to those which Milton

[1] For a bibliography of *Literature on the Nature-Sense*, see Camillo Von Klenze's article in the *Journal of Germanic Philology*, vol. ii. pp. 239–265; also, *The Critic*, vol. xxviii. (new series) pp. 47, 118. On Milton's treatment of nature, see Mr. Squires's article in the *Mod. Lang.*

furnishes, the transition is much the same as when we pass from the scenery of Homer to that of Virgil. The contrast is that between natural free-flowing poetry, in which the beauty is child-like and unconscious, and highly cultured artistic poetry, which produces its effects through a medium of learned illustration, ornate coloring, and stately diction. In the one case Nature is seen directly and at first hand, with nothing between the poet and the object except the imaginative emotion under which he works. In the other, Nature is apprehended only in her 'second intention,' as logicians speak, only as she appears through a beautiful haze, compounded of learning, associations of the past, and carefully selected artistic colors. With Milton, Nature was not his first love, but held only a secondary place in his affections. He was in the first place a scholar, a man of letters, with the theologian and polemic latent in him. A lover of all artistic beauty he was, no doubt, and of Nature mainly as it lends itself to this perception. And as is his mode of apprehending Nature, such is the language in which he describes her. When he reached his full maturity he had framed for himself out of the richness of his genius and the resources of his learning a style elaborate and splendid, so that he stands unique among English poets, 'our one first-rate master in the grand style.' As an eminent living French writer says, — 'For rendering things he has the unique word, the word which is a discovery,' and 'he has not only the image and the word, he has the period also, the large musical phrase, somewhat laden with ornaments and intricate with inversions, but bearing all along with it in

*Notes*, vol. ix. pp. 227–237, where Mr. Squires comes to the conclusion that Milton in the main looked at nature "through the spectacles of books."

its superb undulation. Above all, he has something indescribably serene and victorious, an unfailing level of style, power indomitable.' This admirable description of M. Scherer applies mainly to Milton's style, as it was fully elaborated in his great epic. And the thought has sometimes occurred, whether this magnificently elaborated style can be a fit vehicle for rendering truly the simplicity, the refreshingness of Nature, — whether the poet's art, from its very opulence, must not color too much the clearness and transparency of the external world. However this may be, it is certain that it is not to his maturer poems, with their grandeur of style, that we look for his most vivid renderings of scenery, but to those early poems, which had more native grace of diction and less of artistic elaboration. Nowhere has Milton shown such an eye for scenery as in those first poems, 'L'Allegro,' 'Il Penseroso,' 'Lycidas,' and 'Comus,' composed before he was thirty, just after leaving Cambridge, while he was living under his father's roof at Horton, in Buckinghamshire. During the five years of country life, the most genial of all his years, amid his incessant study of the Greek and Latin poets, and other self-improvement, his heart was perhaps more open than at any other time to the moral beauty which lay around him. 'Comus' and 'Lycidas' both contain fine natural imagery, yet somewhat deflected by the artistic framework in which it is set. In the latter poem, in which Milton, adopting the idyllic form of Virgil, fills it with a mightier power, classical allusion and mythology are strangely, yet not unharmoniously, blended with pictures taken from English landscape. Every one remembers the splendid grouping of flowers which he there broiders in. Of this catalogue it has been observed that, beautiful as it is, it violates the truth of nature, as it places side by side flowers

of different seasons which are never seen flowering together. It is in his two 'descriptive Lyrics' that we find the clearest proofs of an eye that had observed Nature at first hand and for itself. In the poem descriptive of mirth, it has been observed that the mirth is of a very sedate kind, not reaching beyond a 'trim and stately cheerfulness.' The mythological pedigrees attached both to mirth and to melancholy strike us now as somewhat strange, if not frigid; but, with this allowance, Milton's richly sensuous imagination bodies forth the cheerfulness, as he wished to portray it, in a succession of images unsurpassed for beauty. In the lines descriptive of these images, Art and Nature appear perhaps more than in any other of Milton's poems in perfect equipoise. The images selected are the aptest vehicles of the sentiment; the language in which they are expressed is of the most graceful and musical; while the natural objects themselves are seen at first hand, set down with their edges still sharp, and uncolored by any tinge of bookish allusion. Aspects of English scenery, one after another, occur, which he was the first poet to note, and which none since could dare to touch, so entirely has he made them his own. The mower whetting his scythe,—who ever hears that sound coming from the lawn in the morning without thinking of Milton? 'The tanned haycock in the mead;' the cottage chimney smoking betwixt two aged oaks; the moon

> 'As if her head she bowed,
> Stooping through a fleecy cloud;'

the shower pattering

> 'On the ruffling leaves,
> With minute drops from off the eaves;'

the great curfew-bell heard swinging 'over some wide watered shore;'—these are all images taken straight from English landscape which Milton has forever enshrined in his two matchless poems.

Of these two poems, describing the bright and the thoughtful aspects of Nature, my friend Mr. Palgrave,[1] in his exquisite collection of English Lyrics, 'The Golden Treasury,' has observed that these are the earliest pure descriptive lyrics in our language, adding that it is a striking proof of Milton's astonishing power that these are still the best, in a style which so many great poets have since his time attempted.

[Walter Bagehot, *Literary Studies*, vol. ii. pp. 201–204.]

If from the man we turn to his works, we are struck at once with two singular contrasts. The first of them is this. The distinction between ancient and modern art is sometimes said, and perhaps truly, to consist in the simple bareness of the imaginative conceptions which we find in ancient art, and the comparative complex clothing in which all modern creations are embodied. If we adopt this distinction, Milton seems in some sort ancient, and in some

[1] Mr. Palgrave's most recent criticism of these poems is to be found in his *Landscape in Poetry*, pp. 158–159. He there says that "*L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*, the earliest great lyrics of the landscape in our language, despite all later competition still remain supreme for range, variety, lucidity, and melodious charm within their style. And this style is essentially that of the Greek and the earlier English poets, but enlarged to the conception of whole scenes from Nature; occasionally even panoramic. External images are set simply and impersonally before us, although selected and united in sentiment accordantly with the gay or the meditative mood of the supposed spectator." As to whether the poems may be called "pure *descriptive* lyrics," see Gummere, *Handbook of Poetics*, p. 48.

sort modern. Nothing is so simple as the subject-matter of his works. The two greatest of his creations, the character of Satan and the character of Eve, are two of the simplest — the latter probably the very simplest — in the whole field of literature. On this side Milton's art is classical. On the other hand, in no writer is the imagery more profuse, the illustrations more various, the dress altogether more splendid. And in this respect the style of his art seems romantic and modern. In real truth, however, it is only ancient art in a modern disguise. The dress is a mere dress, and can be stripped off when we will. We all of us do perhaps in memory strip it off ourselves. Notwithstanding the lavish adornments with which her image is presented, the character of Eve is still the simplest sort of feminine essence — the pure embodiment of that inner nature, which we believe and hope that women have. The character of Satan, though it is not so easily described, has nearly as few elements in it. The most purely modern conceptions will not bear to be unclothed in this matter. Their romantic garment clings inseparably to them. Hamlet and Lear are not to be thought of except as complex characters, with very involved and complicated embodiments. They are as difficult to draw out in words as the common characters of life are; that of Hamlet, perhaps, is more so. If we make it, as perhaps we should, the characteristic of modern and romantic art that it presents us with creations which we cannot think of or delineate except as very varied, and, so to say, circumstantial, we must not rank Milton among the masters of romantic art. And without involving the subject in the troubled sea of an old controversy, we may say that the most striking of the poetical peculiarities of Milton is the bare simplicity of his ideas, and the rich abundance of his illustrations.

Another of his peculiarities is equally striking. There seems to be such a thing as second-hand poetry. Some poets, musing on the poetry of other men, have unconsciously shaped it into something of their own: the new conception is like the original, it would never probably have existed had not the original existed previously; still it is sufficiently different from the original to be a new thing, not a copy or a plagiarism; it is a creation, though, so to say, a suggested creation. Gray is as good an example as can be found of a poet whose works abound in this species of semi-original conceptions. Industrious critics track his best lines back, and find others like them which doubtless lingered near his fancy while he was writing them. The same critics have been equally busy with the works of Milton, and equally successful. They find traces of his reading in half his works; not, which any reader could do, in overt similes and distinct illustrations, but also in the very texture of the thought and the expression. In many cases, doubtless, they discover more than he himself knew. A mind like his, which has an immense store of imaginative recollections, can never know which of his own imaginations is exactly suggested by which recollection. Men awake with their best ideas; it is seldom worth while to investigate very curiously whence they came. Our proper business is to adapt, and mould, and act upon them. Of poets perhaps this is true even more remarkably than of other men; their ideas are suggested in modes, and according to laws, which are even more impossible to specify than the ideas of the rest of the world. Second-hand poetry, so to say, often seems quite original to the poet himself; he frequently does not know that he derived it from an old memory; years afterwards it may strike him as it does others. Still, in general, such

inferior species of creation is not so likely to be found in minds of singular originality as in those of less. A brooding, placid, cultivated mind, like that of Gray, is the place where we should expect to meet with it. Great originality disturbs the adaptive process, removes the mind of the poet from the thoughts of other men, and occupies it with its own heated and flashing thoughts. Poetry of the second degree is like the secondary rocks of modern geology — a still, gentle, alluvial formation; the igneous glow of primary genius brings forth ideas like the primeval granite, simple, astounding, and alone. Milton's case is an exception to this rule. His mind has marked originality, probably as much of it as any in literature; but it has as much of moulded recollection as any mind too. His poetry in consequence is like an artificial park, green, and soft, and beautiful, yet with outlines bold, distinct, and firm, and the eternal rock ever jutting out; or, better still, it is like our own Lake scenery, where Nature has herself the same combination — where we have Rydal Water side by side with the everlasting upheaved mountain. Milton has the same union of softened beauty with unimpaired grandeur; and it is his peculiarity.

These are the two contrasts which puzzle us at first in Milton, and which distinguish him from other poets of our remembrance afterwards. We have a superficial complexity in illustration, and imagery, and metaphor; and in contrast with it we observe a latent simplicity of idea, an almost rude strength of conception. The underlying thoughts are few, though the flowers on the surface are so many. We have likewise the perpetual contrast of the soft poetry of the memory, and the firm, as it were fused, and glowing poetry of the imagination. His words, we may half fancifully say, are like his character. There is the

same austerity in the real essence, the same exquisiteness of sense, the same delicacy of form which we know that he had, the same music which we imagine there was in his voice. In both his character and his poetry there was an ascetic nature in a sheath of beauty.

[Arnold, *Essays in Criticism*, Second Series, pp. 63–66.[1]]

That Milton, of all our English race, is by his diction and rhythm the one artist of the highest rank in the great style whom we have; this I take as requiring no discussion, this I take as certain.

The mighty power of poetry and art is generally admitted. But where the soul of this power, of this power at its best, chiefly resides, very many of us fail to see. It resides chiefly in the refining and elevation wrought in us by the high and rare excellence of the great style. We may feel the effect without being able to give ourselves clear account of its cause, but the thing is so. Now, no race needs the influences mentioned, the influences of refining and elevation, more than ours; and in poetry and art our grand source for them is Milton.

To what does he owe this supreme distinction? To nature first and foremost, to that bent of nature for inequality which to the worshippers of the average man is so unacceptable; to a gift, a divine favour. 'The older one grows,' says Goethe, 'the more one prizes natural gifts, because by no possibility can they be procured and stuck on.' Nature formed Milton to be a great poet. But what other poet has shown so sincere a sense of the grandeur of his vocation, and a moral effort so constant and sublime

[1] Arnold writes in a similar strain in the latter part of his essay entitled *A French Critic on Milton*, in *Mixed Essays*, pp. 237–273.

to make and keep himself worthy of it? The Milton of religious and political controversy, and perhaps of domestic life also, is not seldom disfigured by want of amenity, by acerbity. The Milton of poetry, on the other hand, is one of those great men 'who are modest' — to quote a fine remark of Leopardi, that gifted and stricken young Italian, who in his sense for poetic style is worthy to be named with Dante and Milton — 'who are modest, because they continually compare themselves, not with other men, but with that idea of the perfect which they have before their mind.' The Milton of poetry is the man, in his own magnificent phrase, of 'devout prayer to that Eternal Spirit that can enrich with all utterance and knowledge, and sends out his Seraphim with the hallowed fire of his altar, to touch and purify the lips of whom he pleases.' And finally, the Milton of poetry is, in his own words again, the man of 'industrious and select reading.' Continually he lived in companionship with high and rare excellence, with the great Hebrew poets and prophets, with the great poets of Greece and Rome. The Hebrew compositions were not in verse, and can be not inadequately represented by the grand, measured prose of our English Bible. The verse of the poets of Greece and Rome no translation can adequately reproduce. Prose cannot have the power of verse; verse-translation may give whatever of charm is in the soul and talent of the translator himself, but never the specific charm of the verse and poet translated. In our race are thousands of readers, presently there will be millions, who know not a word of Greek and Latin, and will never learn those languages. If this host of readers are ever to gain any sense of the power and charm of the great poets of antiquity, their way to gain it is not through translations of the ancients, but through the original poetry of Milton,

who has the like power and charm, because he has the like great style.

TENNYSON'S ALCAICS TO MILTON.

O mighty-mouth'd inventor of harmonies,
O skill'd to sing of Time or Eternity,
God-gifted organ-voice of England,
Milton, a name to resound for ages;
Whose Titan angels, Gabriel, Abdiel,
Starr'd from Jehovah's gorgeous armouries,
Tower, as the deep-domed empyrëan
Rings to the roar of an angel onset—
Me rather all that bowery loneliness,
The brooks of Eden mazily murmuring,
And bloom profuse and cedar arches
Charm, as a wanderer out in ocean,
Where some refulgent sunset of India
Streams o'er a rich ambrosial ocean isle,
And crimson-hued the stately palm-woods
Whisper in odorous heights of even.

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## II. BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE.

So much has been written about Milton that only the best can be mentioned here. *The Poetical Works of John Milton* (Macmillan), in three volumes, edited by Professor David Masson, is the standard edition of Milton's poetry. The Globe edition (Macmillan), also edited by Professor Masson, contains the poetical works in one volume, and should be in the hands of every student. Of recent annotated editions, those of Verity and Browne may be

specially mentioned. The other important editions, from Newton's down, are referred to or quoted in the notes to the present volume. At least as much of Milton's prose should be read as is contained in Morley's *English Prose Writings of John Milton* (Routledge), if the student has not the time or the inclination to read through the five volumes in the Bohn library.

Professor Masson's *Life of John Milton* (Macmillan), in six volumes, is the authoritative biography, although Brooke's *Milton* (Appleton), Pattison's *Milton* (Harper), or Garnett's *John Milton* (Walter Scott), the latter of which has a good bibliography, will better answer the needs of the ordinary student. Besides the authors quoted in the Introduction to the present volume, whose criticisms should be read in their complete form, Addison, Johnson, Coleridge, Macaulay, Landor, Emerson, Lowell, and others of less note have made contributions of more or less value to Miltonic criticism. The student will find Bradshaw's *Concordance to the Poetical Works* (Macmillan) also of value; for the history of Milton's time, he may consult Green's *Short History of the English People* (Harper), and Gardiner's *Puritan Revolution* (Longmans).

# L'ALLEGRO, IL PENSEROSO, COMUS, AND LYCIDAS.

## L'ALLEGRO.

HENCE, loathèd Melancholy,
Of Cerberus and blackest Midnight born
In Stygian cave forlorn
'Mongst horrid shapes, and shrieks, and sights unholy!
Find out some uncouth cell,
Where brooding Darkness spreads his jealous wings,
And the night-raven sings;
There, under ebon shades and low-browed rocks,
As ragged as thy locks,
In dark Cimmerian desert ever dwell.
But come, thou Goddess fair and free,
In heaven yclept Euphrosyne,
And by men heart-easing Mirth;
Whom lovely Venus, at a birth,
With two sister Graces more,
To ivy-crownèd Bacchus bore:
Or whether (as some sager sing)
The frolic wind that breathes the spring,
Zephyr, with Aurora playing,
As he met her once a-Maying,

There, on beds of violets blue,
And fresh-blown roses washed in dew,
Filled her with thee, a daughter fair,
So buxom, blithe, and debonair.
Haste thee, Nymph, and bring with thee
Jest, and youthful Jollity,
Quips and cranks and wanton wiles,
Nods and becks and wreathèd smiles
Such as hang on Hebe's cheek,
And love to live in dimple sleek;
Sport that wrinkled Care derides,
And Laughter holding both his sides.
Come, and trip it, as you go,
On the light fantastic toe;
And in thy right hand lead with thee
The mountain-nymph, sweet Liberty;
And, if I give thee honour due,
Mirth, admit me of thy crew,
To live with her, and live with thee,
In unreprovèd pleasures free:
To hear the lark begin his flight,
And, singing, startle the dull night,
From his watch-tower in the skies,
Till the dappled dawn doth rise;
Then to come, in spite of sorrow,
And at my window bid good-morrow,
Through the sweet-briar or the vine,
Or the twisted eglantine;
While the cock, with lively din,
Scatters the rear of darkness thin,
And to the stack, or the barn-door,

Stoutly struts his dames before:
Oft listening how the hounds and horn
Cheerly rouse the slumbering morn,
From the side of some hoar hill,
Through the high wood echoing shrill:
Sometime walking, not unseen,
By hedgerow elms, on hillocks green,
Right against the eastern gate
Where the great Sun begins his state,
Robed in flames and amber light,
The clouds in thousand liveries dight;
While the ploughman, near at hand,
Whistles o'er the furrowed land,
And the milkmaid singeth blithe,
And the mower whets his scythe,
And every shepherd tells his tale
Under the hawthorn in the dale.
Straight mine eye hath caught new pleasures,
Whilst the landskip round it measures:
Russet lawns, and fallows grey,
Where the nibbling flocks do stray;
Mountains on whose barren breast
The labouring clouds do often rest;
Meadows trim, with daisies pied;
Shallow brooks, and rivers wide;
Towers and battlements it sees
Bosomed high in tufted trees,
Where perhaps some beauty lies,
The cynosure of neighbouring eyes.
Hard by a cottage chimney smokes
From betwixt two aged oaks,

Where Corydon and Thyrsis met
Are at their savoury dinner set
Of herbs and other country messes,
Which the neat-handed Phyllis dresses;
And then in haste her bower she leaves,
With Thestylis to bind the sheaves;
Or, if the earlier season lead,
To the tanned haycock in the mead.
Sometimes, with secure delight,
The upland hamlets will invite,
When the merry bells ring round,
And the jocund rebecks sound
To many a youth and many a maid
Dancing in the chequered shade,
And young and old come forth to play
On a sunshine holiday,
Till the livelong daylight fail:
Then to the spicy nut-brown ale,
With stories told of many a feat,
How Faery Mab the junkets eat.
She was pinched and pulled, she said;
And he, by Friar's lantern led,
Tells how the drudging goblin sweat
To earn his cream-bowl duly set,
When in one night, ere glimpse of morn,
His shadowy flail hath threshed the corn
That ten day-labourers could not end;
Then lies him down, the lubber fiend,
And, stretched out all the chimney's length,
Basks at the fire his hairy strength,
And crop-full out of doors he flings,

Ere the first cock his matin rings.
Thus done the tales, to bed they creep,
By whispering winds soon lulled asleep.
Towered cities please us then,
And the busy hum of men,
Where throngs of knights and barons bold,
In weeds of peace, high triumphs hold,
With store of ladies, whose bright eyes
Rain influence, and judge the prize
Of wit or arms, while both contend
To win her grace whom all commend.
There let Hymen oft appear
In saffron robe, with taper clear,
And pomp, and feast, and revelry,
With mask and antique pageantry;
Such sights as youthful poets dream
On summer eves by haunted stream.
Then to the well-trod stage anon,
If Jonson's learned sock be on,
Or sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy's child,
Warble his native wood-notes wild.
And ever, against eating cares,
Lap me in soft Lydian airs,
Married to immortal verse,
Such as the meeting soul may pierce,
In notes with many a winding bout
Of linkèd sweetness long drawn out
With wanton heed and giddy cunning,
The melting voice through mazes running,
Untwisting all the chains that tie
The hidden soul of harmony;

That Orpheus' self may heave his head
From golden slumber on a bed
Of heaped Elysian flowers, and hear
Such strains as would have won the ear
Of Pluto to have quite set free
His half-regained Eurydice.
These delights if thou canst give,
Mirth, with thee I mean to live.

## IL PENSEROSO.

HENCE, vain deluding Joys,
  The brood of Folly without father bred!
How little you bested,
  Or fill the fixèd mind with all your toys!
Dwell in some idle brain,
  And fancies fond with gaudy shapes possess,
As thick and numberless
  As the gay motes that people the sun-beams,
Or likest hovering dreams,
  The fickle pensioners of Morpheus' train.
But, hail! thou Goddess sage and holy!
Hail, divinest Melancholy!
Whose saintly visage is too bright
To hit the sense of human sight,
And therefore to our weaker view
O'erlaid with black, staid Wisdom's hue;
Black, but such as in esteem
Prince Memnon's sister might beseem,
Or that starred Ethiop queen that strove
To set her beauty's praise above
The Sea-Nymphs, and their powers offended.
Yet thou art higher far descended:
Thee bright-haired Vesta long of yore
To solitary Saturn bore;
His daughter she; in Saturn's reign
Such mixture was not held a stain.

Oft in glimmering bowers and glades
He met her, and in secret shades
Of woody Ida's inmost grove,
Whilst yet there was no fear of Jove.
Come, pensive Nun, devout and pure,
Sober, steadfast, and demure,
All in a robe of darkest grain,
Flowing with majestic train,
And sable stole of cypress lawn
Over thy decent shoulders drawn.
Come; but keep thy wonted state,
With even step, and musing gait,
And looks commercing with the skies,
Thy rapt soul sitting in thine eyes:
There, held in holy passion still,
Forget thyself to marble, till
With a sad leaden downward cast
Thou fix them on the earth as fast.
And join with thee calm Peace and Quiet,
Spare Fast, that oft with gods doth diet,
And hears the Muses in a ring
Aye round about Jove's altar sing;
And add to these retirèd Leisure,
That in trim gardens takes his pleasure;
But, first and chiefest, with thee bring
Him that yon soars on golden wing,
Guiding the fiery-wheelèd throne,
The Cherub Contemplation;
And the mute Silence hist along,
'Less Philomel will deign a song,
In her sweetest saddest plight,

Smoothing the rugged brow of Night,
While Cynthia checks her dragon yoke
Gently o'er the accustomed oak.
Sweet bird, that shunn'st the noise of folly,
Most musical, most melancholy!
Thee, chauntress, oft the woods among
I woo, to hear thy even-song;
And, missing thee, I walk unseen
On the dry smooth-shaven green,
To behold the wandering moon,
Riding near her highest noon,
Like one that had been led astray
Through the heaven's wide pathless way,
And oft, as if her head she bowed,
Stooping through a fleecy cloud.
Oft, on a plat of rising ground,
I hear the far-off curfew sound,
Over some wide-watered shore,
Swinging slow with sullen roar;
Or, if the air will not permit,
Some still removèd place will fit,
Where glowing embers through the room
Teach light to counterfeit a gloom,
Far from all resort of mirth,
Save the cricket on the hearth,
Or the bellman's drowsy charm
To bless the doors from nightly harm.
Or let my lamp, at midnight hour,
Be seen in some high lonely tower,
Where I may oft outwatch the Bear,
With thrice great Hermes, or unsphere

The spirit of Plato, to unfold
What worlds or what vast regions hold
The immortal mind that hath forsook
Her mansion in this fleshly nook;
And of those demons that are found
In fire, air, flood, or underground,
Whose power hath a true consent
With planet or with element.
Sometime let gorgeous Tragedy
In sceptred pall come sweeping by,
Presenting Thebes, or Pelops' line,
Or the tale of Troy divine,
Or what (though rare) of later age
Ennobled hath the buskined stage.
But, O sad Virgin! that thy power
Might raise Musæus from his bower;
Or bid the soul of Orpheus sing
Such notes as, warbled to the string,
Drew iron tears down Pluto's cheek,
And made Hell grant what love did seek;
Or call up him that left half-told
The story of Cambuscan bold,
Of Camball, and of Algarsife,
And who had Canace to wife,
That owned the virtuous ring and glass,
And of the wondrous horse of brass
On which the Tartar king did ride;
And if aught else great bards beside
In sage and solemn tunes have sung,
Of turneys, and of trophies hung,
Of forests, and enchantments drear,

Where more is meant than meets the ear.
Thus, Night, oft see me in thy pale career,
Till civil-suited Morn appear,
Not tricked and frounced, as she was wont
With the Attic boy to hunt,
But kerchieft in a comely cloud,
While rocking winds are piping loud,
Or ushered with a shower still,
When the gust hath blown his fill,
Ending on the rustling leaves,
With minute-drops from off the eaves.
And, when the sun begins to fling
His flaring beams, me, Goddess, bring
To archèd walks of twilight groves,
And shadows brown, that Sylvan loves,
Of pine, or monumental oak,
Where the rude axe with heavèd stroke
Was never heard the nymphs to daunt,
Or fright them from their hallowed haunt.
There, in close covert, by some brook,
Where no profaner eye may look,
Hide me from day's garish eye,
While the bee with honeyed thigh,
That at her flowery work doth sing,
And the waters murmuring,
With such consort as they keep,
Entice the dewy-feathered Sleep.
And let some strange mysterious dream
Wave at his wings, in airy stream
Of lively portraiture displayed,
Softly on my eyelids laid;

And, as I wake, sweet music breathe
Above, about, or underneath,
Sent by some Spirit to mortals good,
Or the unseen Genius of the wood.
But let my due feet never fail
To walk the studious cloister's pale,
And love the high embowèd roof,
With antique pillars massy proof,
And storied windows richly dight,
Casting a dim religious light.
There let the pealing organ blow,
To the full-voiced quire below,
In service high and anthems clear,
As may with sweetness, through mine ear,
Dissolve me into ecstasies,
And bring all Heaven before mine eyes.
And may at last my weary age
Find out the peaceful hermitage,
The hairy gown and mossy cell,
Where I may sit and rightly spell
Of every star that heaven doth shew,
And every herb that sips the dew,
Till old experience do attain
To something like prophetic strain.
These pleasures, Melancholy, give;
And I with thee will choose to live.

# COMUS.

A MASQUE PRESENTED AT LUDLOW CASTLE, 1634, BEFORE THE EARL OF BRIDGEWATER, THEN PRESIDENT OF WALES.

*THE PERSONS.*

The ATTENDANT SPIRIT, afterwards in the habit of THYRSIS.
COMUS, with his Crew.
The LADY.
FIRST BROTHER.
SECOND BROTHER.
SABRINA, the Nymph.

The Chief Persons which presented were: —

The Lord Brackley;
Mr. Thomas Egerton, his Brother;
The Lady Alice Egerton.

# COMUS.

*The first Scene discovers a wild wood.*
*The* ATTENDANT SPIRIT *descends or enters.*

BEFORE the starry threshold of Jove's court
My mansion is, where those immortal shapes
Of bright aerial spirits live insphered
In regions mild of calm and serene air,
Above the smoke and stir of this dim spot
Which men call Earth, and, with low-thoughted care,
Confined and pestered in this pinfold here,
Strive to keep up a frail and feverish being,
Unmindful of the crown that Virtue gives,
After this mortal change, to her true servants
Amongst the enthroned gods on sainted seats.
Yet some there be that by due steps aspire
To lay their just hands on that golden key
That opes the palace of eternity.
To such my errand is; and, but for such,
I would not soil these pure ambrosial weeds
With the rank vapours of this sin-worn mould.
But to my task. Neptune, besides the sway
Of every salt flood and each ebbing stream,
Took in by lot, 'twixt high and nether Jove,
Imperial rule of all the sea-girt isles
That, like to rich and various gems, inlay
The unadornèd bosom of the deep;

Which he, to grace his tributary gods,
By course commits to several government,
And gives them leave to wear their sapphire crowns
And wield their little tridents. But this Isle,
The greatest and the best of all the main,
He quarters to his blue-haired deities;
And all this tract that fronts the falling sun
A noble Peer of mickle trust and power
Has in his charge, with tempered awe to guide
An old and haughty nation, proud in arms:
Where his fair offspring, nursed in princely lore,
Are coming to attend their father's state,
And new-intrusted sceptre. But their way
Lies through the perplexed paths of this drear wood,
The nodding horror of whose shady brows
Threats the forlorn and wandering passenger;
And here their tender age might suffer peril,
But that, by quick command from sovran Jove,
I was despatched for their defence and guard:
And listen why; for I will tell you now
What never yet was heard in tale or song,
From old or modern bard, in hall or bower.
Bacchus, that first from out the purple grape
Crushed the sweet poison of misusèd wine,
After the Tuscan mariners transformed,
Coasting the Tyrrhene shore, as the winds listed,
On Circe's island fell. (Who knows not Circe,
The daughter of the Sun, whose charmèd cup
Whoever tasted lost his upright shape,
And downward fell into a grovelling swine?)
This Nymph, that gazed upon his clustering locks,

With ivy berries wreathed, and his blithe youth,
Had by him, ere he parted thence, a son
Much like his father, but his mother more,
Whom therefore she brought up, and Comus named:
Who, ripe and frolic of his full-grown age,
Roving the Celtic and Iberian fields,
At last betakes him to this ominous wood,
And, in thick shelter of black shades imbowered,
Excels his mother at her mighty art;
Offering to every weary traveller
His orient liquor in a crystal glass,
To quench the drouth of Phœbus; which as they taste
(For most do taste through fond intemperate thirst),
Soon as the potion works, their human count'nance,
The express resemblance of the gods, is changed
Into some brutish form of wolf or bear,
Or ounce or tiger, hog, or bearded goat,
All other parts remaining as they were.
And they, so perfect is their misery,
Not once perceive their foul disfigurement,
But boast themselves more comely than before,
And all their friends and native home forget,
To roll with pleasure in a sensual sty.
Therefore, when any favoured of high Jove
Chances to pass through this adventurous glade,
Swift as the sparkle of a glancing star
I shoot from heaven, to give him safe convoy,
As now I do. But first I must put off
These my sky-robes, spun out of Iris' woof,
And take the weeds and likeness of a swain
That to the service of this house belongs,

Who, with his soft pipe and smooth-dittied song,
Well knows to still the wild winds when they roar,
And hush the waving woods; nor of less faith
And in this office of his mountain watch
Likeliest, and nearest to the present aid
Of this occasion. But I hear the tread
Of hateful steps; I must be viewless now.

COMUS *enters, with a charming-rod in one hand, his glass in the other: with him a rout of monsters, headed like sundry sorts of wild beasts, but otherwise like men and women, their apparel glistering. They come in making a riotous and unruly noise, with torches in their hands.*

*Comus.* The star that bids the shepherd fold
Now the top of heaven doth hold;
And the gilded car of day
His glowing axle doth allay
In the steep Atlantic stream;
And the slope sun his upward beam
Shoots against the dusky pole,
Pacing toward the other goal
Of his chamber in the east.
Meanwhile, welcome joy and feast,
Midnight shout and revelry,
Tipsy dance and jollity.
Braid your locks with rosy twine,
Dropping odours, dropping wine.
Rigour now is gone to bed;
And Advice with scrupulous head,
Strict Age, and sour Severity,
With their grave saws, in slumber lie.

We, that are of purer fire,
Imitate the starry quire,
Who, in their nightly watchful spheres,
Lead in swift round the months and years.
The sounds and seas, with all their finny drove,
Now to the moon in wavering morrice move;
And on the tawny sands and shelves
Trip the pert fairies and the dapper elves.
By dimpled brook and fountain-brim,
The wood-nymphs, decked with daisies trim,
Their merry wakes and pastimes keep:
What hath night to do with sleep?
Night hath better sweets to prove;
Venus now wakes, and wakens Love.
Come, let us our rights begin;
'T is only daylight that makes sin,
Which these dun shades will ne'er report.
Hail, goddess of nocturnal sport,
Dark-veiled Cotytto, to whom the secret flame
Of midnight torches burns! mysterious dame,
That ne'er art called but when the dragon womb
Of Stygian darkness spets her thickest gloom,
And makes one blot of all the air!
Stay thy cloudy ebon chair,
Wherein thou ridest with Hecat', and befriend
Us thy vowed priests, till utmost end
Of all thy dues be done, and none left out,
Ere the blabbing eastern scout,
The nice Morn on the Indian steep,
From her cabined loop-hole peep,
And to the tell-tale Sun descry

Our concealed solemnity.
Come, knit hands, and beat the ground
In a light fantastic round.

*The Measure.*

Break off, break off! I feel the different pace
Of some chaste footing near about this ground.
Run to your shrouds within these brakes and trees;
Our number may affright. Some virgin sure
(For so I can distinguish by mine art)
Benighted in these woods! Now to my charms,
And to my wily trains: I shall ere long
Be well stocked with as fair a herd as grazed
About my mother Circe. Thus I hurl
My dazzling spells into the spongy air,
Of power to cheat the eye with blear illusion,
And give it false presentments, lest the place
And my quaint habits breed astonishment,
And put the damsel to suspicious flight;
Which must not be, for that 's against my course.
I, under fair pretence of friendly ends,
And well-placed words of glozing courtesy,
Baited with reasons not unplausible,
Wind me into the easy-hearted man,
And hug him into snares. When once her eye
Hath met the virtue of this magic dust,
I shall appear some harmless villager
Whom thrift keeps up about his country gear.
But here she comes; I fairly step aside,
And hearken, if I may her business hear.

*The* LADY *enters.*

*Lady.* This way the noise was, if mine ear be true,
My best guide now. Methought it was the sound
Of riot and ill-managed merriment,
Such as the jocund flute or gamesome pipe
Stirs up among the loose unlettered hinds,
When, for their teeming flocks and granges full,
In wanton dance they praise the bounteous Pan,
And thank the gods amiss. I should be loth
To meet the rudeness and swilled insolence
Of such late wassailers; yet, oh! where else
Shall I inform my unacquainted feet
In the blind mazes of this tangled wood?
My brothers, when they saw me wearied out
With this long way, resolving here to lodge
Under the spreading favour of these pines,
Stepped, as they said, to the next thicket-side
To bring me berries, or such cooling fruit
As the kind hospitable woods provide.
They left me then when the grey-hooded Even,
Like a sad votarist in palmer's weed,
Rose from the hindmost wheels of Phœbus' wain.
But where they are, and why they came not back,
Is now the labour of my thoughts. 'T is likeliest
They had engaged their wandering steps too far;
And envious darkness, ere they could return,
Had stole them from me. Else, O thievish Night,
Why shouldst thou, but for some felonious end,
In thy dark lantern thus close up the stars
That Nature hung in heaven, and filled their lamps

With everlasting oil to give due light
To the misled and lonely traveller?
This is the place, as well as I may guess,
Whence even now the tumult of loud mirth
Was rife, and perfect in my listening ear;
Yet nought but single darkness do I find.
What might this be? A thousand fantasies
Begin to throng into my memory,
Of calling shapes, and beckoning shadows dire,
And airy tongues that syllable men's names
On sands and shores and desert wildernesses.
These thoughts may startle well, but not astound
The virtuous mind, that ever walks attended
By a strong siding champion, Conscience.
O, welcome, pure-eyed Faith, white-handed Hope,
Thou hovering angel girt with golden wings,
And thou unblemished form of Chastity!
I see ye visibly, and now believe
That He, the Supreme Good, to whom all things ill
Are but as slavish officers of vengeance,
Would send a glistering guardian, if need were,
To keep my life and honour unassailed. . . .
Was I deceived, or did a sable cloud
Turn forth her silver lining on the night?
I did not err: there does a sable cloud
Turn forth her silver lining on the night,
And casts a gleam over this tufted grove.
I cannot hallo to my brothers, but
Such noise as I can make to be heard farthest
I 'll venture; for my new-enlivened spirits
Prompt me, and they perhaps are not far off.

*Song.*

Sweet Echo, sweetest nymph, that liv'st unseen
Within thy airy shell
By slow Meander's margent green,
And in the violet-embroidered vale
Where the love-lorn nightingale
Nightly to thee her sad song mourneth well:
Canst thou not tell me of a gentle pair
That likest thy Narcissus are?
O, if thou have
Hid them in some flowery cave,
Tell me but where,
Sweet Queen of Parley, Daughter of the Sphere!
So may'st thou be translated to the skies,
And give resounding grace to all Heaven's harmonies!

*Comus.* Can any mortal mixture of earth's mould
Breathe such divine enchanting ravishment?
Sure something holy lodges in that breast,
And with these raptures moves the vocal air
To testify his hidden residence.
How sweetly did they float upon the wings
Of silence, through the empty-vaulted night,
At every fall smoothing the raven down
Of darkness till it smiled! I have oft heard
My mother Circe with the Sirens three,
Amidst the flowery-kirtled Naiades,
Culling their potent herbs and baleful drugs,
Who, as they sung, would take the prisoned soul,
And lap it in Elysium: Scylla wept,

And chid her barking waves into attention,
And fell Charybdis murmured soft applause.
Yet they in pleasing slumber lulled the sense,
And in sweet madness robbed it of itself;
But such a sacred and home-felt delight,
Such sober certainty of waking bliss,
I never heard till now. I 'll speak to her,
And she shall be my queen. — Hail, foreign wonder!
Whom certain these rough shades did never breed,
Unless the goddess that in rural shrine
Dwell'st here with Pan or Sylvan, by blest song
Forbidding every bleak unkindly fog
To touch the prosperous growth of this tall wood.

*Lady.* Nay, gentle shepherd, ill is lost that praise
That is addressed to unattending ears.
Not any boast of skill, but extreme shift
How to regain my severed company,
Compelled me to awake the courteous Echo
To give me answer from her mossy couch.

*Comus.* What chance, good Lady, hath bereft you thus?

*Lady.* Dim darkness and this leafy labyrinth.

*Comus.* Could that divide you from near-ushering guides?

*Lady.* They left me weary on a grassy turf.

*Comus.* By falsehood, or discourtesy, or why?

*Lady.* To seek i' the valley some cool friendly spring.

*Comus.* And left your fair side all unguarded, Lady?

*Lady.* They were but twain, and purposed quick return.

*Comus.* Perhaps forestalling night prevented them.

*Lady.* How easy my misfortune is to hit!
*Comus.* Imports their loss, beside the present need?
*Lady.* No less than if I should my brothers lose.
*Comus.* Were they of manly prime, or youthful bloom?
*Lady.* As smooth as Hebe's their unrazored lips.
*Comus.* Two such I saw, what time the laboured ox
In his loose traces from the furrow came,
And the swinked hedger at his supper sat.
I saw them under a green mantling vine,
That crawls along the side of yon small hill,
Plucking ripe clusters from the tender shoots;
Their port was more than human, as they stood.
I took it for a faery vision
Of some gay creatures of the element,
That in the colours of the rainbow live,
And play i' the plighted clouds. I was awe-strook,
And, as I passed, I worshiped. If those you seek,
It were a journey like the path to Heaven
To help you find them.
*Lady.* Gentle villager,
What readiest way would bring me to that place?
*Comus.* Due west it rises from this shrubby point.
*Lady.* To find out that, good shepherd, I suppose,
In such a scant allowance of star-light,
Would overtask the best land-pilot's art,
Without the sure guess of well-practised feet.
*Comus.* I know each lane, and every alley green,
Dingle, or bushy dell, of this wild wood,
And every bosky bourn from side to side,
My daily walks and ancient neighbourhood;
And, if your stray attendance be yet lodged,

Or shroud within these limits, I shall know
Ere morrow wake, or the low-roosted lark
From her thatched pallet rouse. If otherwise,
I can conduct you, Lady, to a low
But loyal cottage, where you may be safe
Till further quest.
*Lady.* Shepherd, I take thy word,
And trust thy honest-offered courtesy,
Which oft is sooner found in lowly sheds,
With smoky rafters, than in tapestry halls
And courts of princes, where it first was named,
And yet is most pretended. In a place
Less warranted than this, or less secure,
I cannot be, that I should fear to change it.
Eye me, blest Providence, and square my trial
To my proportioned strength! Shepherd, lead on.

*The* TWO BROTHERS.

*Eld. Bro.* Unmuffle, ye faint stars; and thou, fair moon,
That wont'st to love the traveller's benison,
Stoop thy pale visage through an amber cloud,
And disinherit Chaos, that reigns here
In double night of darkness and of shades;
Or, if your influence be quite dammed up
With black usurping mists, some gentle taper,
Though a rush-candle from the wicker hole
Of some clay habitation, visit us
With thy long levelled rule of streaming light,
And thou shalt be our star of Arcady,
Or Tyrian Cynosure.

*Sec. Bro.* Or, if our eyes
Be barred that happiness, might we but hear
The folded flocks, penned in their wattled cotes,
Or sound of pastoral reed with oaten stops,
Or whistle from the lodge, or village cock
Count the night-watches to his feathery dames,
'T would be some solace yet, some little cheering,
In this close dungeon of innumerous boughs.
But, oh, that hapless virgin, our lost sister!
Where may she wander now, whither betake her
From the chill dew, amongst rude burs and thistles?
Perhaps some cold bank is her bolster now,
Or 'gainst the rugged bark of some broad elm
Leans her unpillowed head, fraught with sad fears.
What if in wild amazement and affright,
Or, while we speak, within the direful grasp
Of savage hunger, or of savage heat!
*Eld. Bro.* Peace, brother: be not over-exquisite
To cast the fashion of uncertain evils;
For, grant they be so, while they rest unknown,
What need a man forestall his date of grief,
And run to meet what he would most avoid?
Or, if they be but false alarms of fear,
How bitter is such self-delusion!
I do not think my sister so to seek,
Or so unprincipled in virtue's book,
And the sweet peace that goodness bosoms ever,
As that the single want of light and noise
(Not being in danger, as I trust she is not)
Could stir the constant mood of her calm thoughts,
And put them into misbecoming plight.

Virtue could see to do what Virtue would
By her own radiant light, though sun and moon
Were in the flat sea sunk. And Wisdom's self
Oft seeks to sweet retirèd solitude,
Where, with her best nurse, Contemplation,
She plumes her feathers, and lets grow her wings,
That, in the various bustle of resort,
Were all to-ruffled, and sometimes impaired.
He that has light within his own clear breast
May sit i' the centre, and enjoy bright day:
But he that hides a dark soul and foul thoughts
Benighted walks under the mid-day sun;
Himself is his own dungeon.
*Sec. Bro.* 'T is most true
That musing meditation most affects
The pensive secrecy of desert cell,
Far from the cheerful haunt of men and herds,
And sits as safe as in a senate-house;
For who would rob a hermit of his weeds,
His few books, or his beads, or maple dish,
Or do his grey hairs any violence?
But Beauty, like the fair Hesperian tree
Laden with blooming gold, had need the guard
Of dragon-watch with unenchanted eye
To save her blossoms, and defend her fruit,
From the rash hand of bold Incontinence.
You may as well spread out the unsunned heaps
Of miser's treasure by an outlaw's den,
And tell me it is safe, as bid me hope
Danger will wink on Opportunity,
And let a single helpless maiden pass

Uninjured in this wild surrounding waste.
Of night or loneliness it recks me not;
I fear the dread events that dog them both,
Lest some ill-greeting touch attempt the person
Of our unownèd sister.
*Eld. Bro.* I do not, brother,
Infer as if I thought my sister's state
Secure without all doubt or controversy;
Yet, where an equal poise of hope and fear
Does arbitrate the event, my nature is
That I incline to hope rather than fear,
And gladly banish squint suspicion.
My sister is not so defenceless left
As you imagine; she has a hidden strength,
Which you remember not.
*Sec. Bro.* What hidden strength,
Unless the strength of Heaven, if you mean that?
*Eld. Bro.* I mean that too, but yet a hidden strength,
Which, if Heaven gave it, may be termed her own.
'T is chastity, my brother, chastity:
She that has that is clad in complete steel,
And, like a quivered nymph with arrows keen,
May trace huge forests, and unharboured heaths,
Infamous hills, and sandy perilous wilds;
Where, through the sacred rays of chastity,
No savage fierce, bandite, or mountaineer,
Will dare to soil her virgin purity.
Yea, there where very desolation dwells,
By grots and caverns shagged with horrid shades,
She may pass on with unblenched majesty,
Be it not done in pride, or in presumption.

Some say no evil thing that walks by night,
In fog or fire, by lake or moorish fen,
Blue meagre hag, or stubborn unlaid ghost,
That breaks his magic chains at curfew time,
No goblin or swart faery of the mine,
Hath hurtful power o'er true virginity.
Do ye believe me yet, or shall I call
Antiquity from the old schools of Greece
To testify the arms of chastity?
Hence had the huntress Dian her dread bow
Fair silver-shafted queen for ever chaste,
Wherewith she tamed the brinded lioness
And spotted mountain-pard, but set at nought
The frivolous bolt of Cupid; gods and men
Feared her stern frown, and she was queen o' the woods.
What was that snaky-headed Gorgon shield
That wise Minerva wore, unconquered virgin,
Wherewith she freezed her foes to congealed stone,
But rigid looks of chaste austerity,
And noble grace that dashed brute violence
With sudden adoration and blank awe?
So dear to Heaven is saintly chastity
That, when a soul is found sincerely so,
A thousand liveried angels lackey her,
Driving far off each thing of sin and guilt,
And in clear dream and solemn vision
Tell her of things that no gross ear can hear;
Till oft converse with heavenly habitants
Begin to cast a beam on the outward shape,
The unpolluted temple of the mind,
And turns it by degrees to the soul's essence,

Till all be made immortal. But, when lust,
By unchaste looks, loose gestures, and foul talk,
But most by lewd and lavish act of sin,
Lets in defilement to the inward parts,
The soul grows clotted by contagion,
Imbodies, and imbrutes, till she quite loose
The divine property of her first being.
Such are those thick and gloomy shadows damp
Oft seen in charnel-vaults and sepulchres,
Lingering and sitting by a new-made grave,
As loth to leave the body that it loved,
And linked itself by carnal sensualty
To a degenerate and degraded state.
*Sec. Bro.* How charming is divine Philosophy!
Not harsh and crabbed, as dull fools suppose,
But musical as is Apollo's lute,
And a perpetual feast of nectared sweets,
Where no crude surfeit reigns.
*Eld. Bro.* List! list! I hear
Some far-off hallo break the silent air.
*Sec. Bro.* Methought so too; what should it be?
*Eld. Bro.* For certain,
Either some one, like us, night-foundered here,
Or else some neighbour woodman, or, at worst,
Some roving robber calling to his fellows.
*Sec. Bro.* Heaven keep my sister! Again, again, and near!
Best draw, and stand upon our guard.
*Eld. Bro.* I 'll hallo.
If he be friendly, he comes well: if not,
Defence is a good cause, and Heaven be for us!

*The* ATTENDANT SPIRIT, *habited like a shepherd.*

That hallo I should know. What are you? speak.
Come not too near; you fall on iron stakes else.

*Spir.* What voice is that? my young Lord? speak again.

*Sec. Bro.* O brother, 't is my father's Shepherd, sure.

*Eld. Bro.* Thyrsis! whose artful strains have oft delayed
The huddling brook to hear his madrigal,
And sweetened every musk-rose of the dale.
How camest thou here, good swain? Hath any ram
Slipped from the fold, or young kid lost his dam,
Or straggling wether the pent flock forsook?
How couldst thou find this dark sequestered nook?

*Spir.* O my loved master's heir, and his next joy,
I came not here on such a trivial toy
As a strayed ewe, or to pursue the stealth
Of pilfering wolf; not all the fleecy wealth
That doth enrich these downs is worth a thought
To this my errand, and the care it brought.
But, oh! my virgin Lady, where is she?
How chance she is not in your company?

*Eld. Bro.* To tell thee sadly, Shepherd, without blame
Or our neglect, we lost her as we came.

*Spir.* Ay me unhappy! then my fears are true.

*Eld. Bro.* What fears, good Thyrsis? Prithee briefly shew.

*Spir.* I 'll tell ye. 'T is not vain or fabulous
(Though so esteemed by shallow ignorance)
What the sage poets, taught by the heavenly Muse,

Storied of old in high immortal verse
Of dire Chimeras and enchanted isles,
And rifted rocks whose entrance leads to Hell;
For such there be, but unbelief is blind.
Within the navel of this hideous wood,
Immured in cypress shades, a sorcerer dwells,
Of Bacchus and of Circe born, great Comus,
Deep skilled in all his mother's witcheries,
And here to every thirsty wanderer
By sly enticement gives his baneful cup,
With many murmurs mixed, whose pleasing poison
The visage quite transforms of him that drinks,
And the inglorious likeness of a beast
Fixes instead, unmoulding reason's mintage
Charactered in the face. This have I learnt
Tending my flocks hard by i' the hilly crofts
That brow this bottom glade; whence night by night
He and his monstrous rout are heard to howl
Like stabled wolves, or tigers at their prey,
Doing abhorrèd rites to Hecate
In their obscurèd haunts of inmost bowers.
Yet have they many baits and guileful spells
To inveigle and invite the unwary sense
Of them that pass unweeting by the way.
This evening late, by then the chewing flocks
Had ta'en their supper on the savoury herb
Of knot-grass dew-besprent, and were in fold,
I sat me down to watch upon a bank
With ivy canopied, and interwove
With flaunting honeysuckle, and began,
Wrapt in a pleasing fit of melancholy,

To meditate my rural minstrelsy,
Till fancy had her fill. But ere a close
The wonted roar was up amidst the woods,
And filled the air with barbarous dissonance;
At which I ceased, and listened them awhile,
Till an unusual stop of sudden silence
Gave respite to the drowsy-flighted steeds
That draw the litter of close-curtained Sleep.
At last a soft and solemn-breathing sound
Rose like a steam of rich distilled perfumes,
And stole upon the air, that even Silence
Was took ere she was ware, and wished she might
Deny her nature, and be never more,
Still to be so displaced. I was all ear,
And took in strains that might create a soul
Under the ribs of Death. But, oh! ere long
Too well I did perceive it was the voice
Of my most honoured Lady, your dear sister.
Amazed I stood, harrowed with grief and fear;
And "O poor hapless nightingale," thought I,
"How sweet thou sing'st, how near the deadly snare!"
Then down the lawns I ran with headlong haste,
Through paths and turnings often trod by day,
Till, guided by mine ear, I found the place
Where that damned wizard, hid in sly disguise
(For so by certain signs I knew), had met
Already, ere my best speed could prevent,
The aidless innocent lady, his wished prey;
Who gently asked if he had seen such two,
Supposing him some neighbour villager.
Longer I durst not stay, but soon I guessed

Ye were the two she meant; with that I sprung
Into swift flight, till I had found you here;
But further know I not.
*Sec. Bro.* O night and shades,
How are ye joined with hell in triple knot
Against the unarmed weakness of one virgin,
Alone and helpless! Is this the confidence
You gave me, brother?
*Eld. Bro.* Yes, and keep it still;
Lean on it safely; not a period
Shall be unsaid for me. Against the threats
Of malice or of sorcery, or that power
Which erring men call Chance, this I hold firm:
Virtue may be assailed, but never hurt,
Surprised by unjust force, but not enthralled;
Yea, even that which Mischief meant most harm
Shall in the happy trial prove most glory.
But evil on itself shall back recoil,
And mix no more with goodness, when at last,
Gathered like scum, and settled to itself,
It shall be in eternal restless change
Self-fed and self-consumed. If this fail,
The pillared firmament is rottenness,
And earth's base built on stubble. But come, let 's on!
Against the opposing will and arm of heaven
May never this just sword be lifted up;
But, for that damned magician, let him be girt
With all the griesly legions that troop
Under the sooty flag of Acheron,
Harpies and Hydras, or all the monstrous forms
'Twixt Africa and Ind, I 'll find him out,

And force him to return his purchase back,
Or drag him by the curls to a foul death,
Cursed as his life.
*Spir.* Alas! good venturous youth,
I love thy courage yet, and bold emprise;
But here thy sword can do thee little stead.
Far other arms and other weapons must
Be those that quell the might of hellish charms.
He with his bare wand can unthread thy joints,
And crumble all thy sinews.
*Eld. Bro.* Why, prithee, Shepherd,
How durst thou then thyself approach so near
As to make this relation?
*Spir.* Care and utmost shifts
How to secure the Lady from surprisal
Brought to my mind a certain shepherd lad,
Of small regard to see to, yet well skilled
In every virtuous plant and healing herb
That spreads her verdant leaf to the morning ray.
He loved me well, and oft would beg me sing;
Which when I did, he on the tender grass
Would sit, and hearken even to ecstasy,
And in requital ope his leathern scrip,
And show me simples of a thousand names,
Telling their strange and vigorous faculties.
Amongst the rest a small unsightly root,
But of divine effect, he culled me out.
The leaf was darkish, and had prickles on it,
But in another country, as he said,
Bore a bright golden flower, but not in this soil:
Unknown, and like esteemed, and the dull swain

Treads on it daily with his clouted shoon ;
And yet more med'cinal is it than that Moly
That Hermes once to wise Ulysses gave.
He called it Hæmony, and gave it me,
And bade me keep it as of sovran use
'Gainst all enchantments, mildew blast, or damp,
Or ghastly Furies' apparition.
I pursed it up, but little reckoning made,
Till now that this extremity compelled.
But now I find it true ; for by this means
I knew the foul enchanter, though disguised,
Entered the very lime-twigs of his spells,
And yet came off. If you have this about you
(As I will give you when we go), you may
Boldly assault the necromancer's hall ;
Where if he be, with dauntless hardihood
And brandished blade rush on him : break his glass,
And shed the luscious liquor on the ground ;
But seize his wand. Though he and his curst crew
Fierce sign of battle make, and menace high,
Or, like the sons of Vulcan, vomit smoke,
Yet will they soon retire, if he but shrink.

*Eld. Bro.* Thyrsis, lead on apace ; I 'll follow thee ;
And some good angel bear a shield before us !

*The Scene changes to a stately palace, set out with all manner of deliciousness : soft music, tables spread with all dainties.* COMUS *appears with his rabble, and the* LADY *set in an enchanted chair ; to whom he offers his glass ; which she puts by, and goes about to rise.*

*Comus.* Nay, Lady, sit. If I but wave this wand,
Your nerves are all chained up in alabaster,

And you a statue, or as Daphne was,
Root-bound, that fled Apollo.
*Lady.* Fool, do not boast.
Thou canst not touch the freedom of my mind
With all thy charms, although this corporal rind
Thou hast immanacled while Heaven sees good.
*Comus.* Why are you vexed, Lady? why do you frown?
Here dwell no frowns, nor anger; from these gates
Sorrow flies far. See, here be all the pleasures
That fancy can beget on youthful thoughts,
When the fresh blood grows lively, and returns
Brisk as the April buds in primrose season.
And first behold this cordial julep here,
That flames and dances in his crystal bounds,
With spirits of balm and fragrant syrups mixed.
Not that Nepenthes which the wife of Thone
In Egypt gave to Jove-born Helena
Is of such power to stir up joy as this,
To life so friendly, or so cool to thirst.
Why should you be so cruel to yourself,
And to those dainty limbs, which Nature lent
For gentle usage and soft delicacy?
But you invert the covenants of her trust,
And harshly deal, like an ill borrower,
With that which you received on other terms,
Scorning the unexempt condition
By which all mortal frailty must subsist,
Refreshment after toil, ease after pain,
That have been tired all day without repast,
And timely rest have wanted. But, fair virgin,
This will restore all soon.

*Lady.* 'T will not, false traitor!
'T will not restore the truth and honesty
That thou hast banished from thy tongue with lies.
Was this the cottage and the safe abode
Thou told'st me of? What grim aspects are these,
These oughly-headed monsters? Mercy guard me!
Hence with thy brewed enchantments, foul deceiver!
Hast thou betrayed my credulous innocence
With vizored falsehood and base forgery?
And would'st thou seek again to trap me here
With liquorish baits, fit to ensnare a brute?
Were it a draught for Juno when she banquets,
I would not taste thy treasonous offer. None
But such as are good men can give good things;
And that which is not good is not delicious
To a well-governed and wise appetite.

*Comus.* O foolishness of men! that lend their ears
To those budge doctors of the Stoic fur,
And fetch their precepts from the Cynic tub,
Praising the lean and sallow Abstinence!
Wherefore did Nature pour her bounties forth
With such a full and unwithdrawing hand,
Covering the earth with odours, fruits, and flocks,
Thronging the seas with spawn innumerable,
But all to please and sate the curious taste?
And set to work millions of spinning worms,
That in their green shops weave the smooth-haired silk,
To deck her sons; and, that no corner might
Be vacant of her plenty, in her own loins
She hutched the all-worshipped ore and precious gems,
To store her children with. If all the world

Should, in a pet of temperance, feed on pulse,
Drink the clear stream, and nothing wear but frieze,
The All-giver would be unthanked, would be unpraised,
Not half his riches known, and yet despised;
And we should serve him as a grudging master,
As a penurious niggard of his wealth,
And live like Nature's bastards, not her sons,
Who would be quite surcharged with her own weight,
And strangled with her waste fertility:
The earth cumbered, and the winged air darked with plumes,
The herds would over-multitude their lords;
The sea o'erfraught would swell, and the unsought diamonds
Would so emblaze the forehead of the deep,
And so bestud with stars, that they below
Would grow inured to light, and come at last
To gaze upon the sun with shameless brows.
List, Lady; be not coy, and be not cozened
With that same vaunted name, Virginity.
Beauty is Nature's coin; must not be hoarded,
But must be current; and the good thereof
Consists in mutual and partaken bliss,
Unsavoury in the enjoyment of itself.
If you let slip time, like a neglected rose
It withers on the stalk with languished head.
Beauty is Nature's brag, and must be shown
In courts, at feasts, and high solemnities,
Where most may wonder at the workmanship.
It is for homely features to keep home;
They had their name thence: coarse complexions

And cheeks of sorry grain will serve to ply
The sampler, and to tease the huswife's wool.
What need a vermeil-tinctured lip for that,
Love-darting eyes, or tresses like the morn?
There was another meaning in these gifts;
Think what, and be advised; you are but young yet.
*Lady.* I had not thought to have unlocked my lips
In this unhallowed air, but that this juggler
Would think to charm my judgment, as mine eyes,
Obtruding false rules pranked in reason's garb.
I hate when vice can bolt her arguments
And virtue has no tongue to check her pride.
Impostor! do not charge most innocent Nature,
As if she would her children should be riotous
With her abundance. She, good cateress,
Means her provision only to the good,
That live according to her sober laws,
And holy dictate of spare Temperance.
If every just man that now pines with want
Had but a moderate and beseeming share
Of that which lewdly-pampered Luxury
Now heaps upon some few with vast excess,
Nature's full blessings would be well dispensed
In unsuperfluous even proportion,
And she no whit encumbered with her store;
And then the Giver would be better thanked,
His praise due paid: for swinish gluttony
Ne'er looks to Heaven amidst his gorgeous feast,
But with besotted base ingratitude
Crams, and blasphemes his Feeder. Shall I go on?
Or have I said enow? To him that dares

Arm his profane tongue with contemptuous words
Against the sun-clad power of chastity
Fain would I something say ; — yet to what end ?
Thou hast nor ear, nor soul, to apprehend
The sublime notion and high mystery
That must be uttered to unfold the sage
And serious doctrine of Virginity ;
And thou art worthy that thou shouldst not know
More happiness than this thy present lot.
Enjoy your dear wit, and gay rhetoric,
That hath so well been taught her dazzling fence ;
Thou art not fit to hear thyself convinced.
Yet, should I try, the uncontrollèd worth
Of this pure cause would kindle my rapt spirits
To such a flame of sacred vehemence
That dumb things would be moved to sympathise,
And the brute Earth would lend her nerves, and shake,
Till all thy magic structures, reared so high,
Were shattered into heaps o'er thy false head.
*Comus.* She fables not. I feel that I do fear
Her words set off by some superior power ;
And, though not mortal, yet a cold shuddering dew
Dips me all o'er, as when the wrath of Jove
Speaks thunder and the chains of Erebus
To some of Saturn's crew. I must dissemble,
And try her yet more strongly. — Come, no more !
This is mere moral babble, and direct
Against the canon laws of our foundation.
I must not suffer this ; yet 't is but the lees
And settlings of a melancholy blood.
But this will cure all straight ; one sip of this

Will bathe the drooping spirits in delight
Beyond the bliss of dreams. Be wise, and taste.

*The* BROTHERS *rush in with swords drawn, wrest his glass out of his hand, and break it against the ground: his rout make sign of resistance, but are all driven in. The* ATTENDANT SPIRIT *comes in.*

*Spir.* What! have you let the false enchanter scape?
O ye mistook; ye should have snatched his wand,
And bound him fast. Without his rod reversed,
And backward mutters of dissevering power,
We cannot free the Lady that sits here
In stony fetters fixed and motionless.
Yet stay: be not disturbed; now I bethink me,
Some other means I have which may be used,
Which once of Melibœus old I learnt,
The soothest shepherd that e'er piped on plains.
There is a gentle Nymph not far from hence,
That with moist curb sways the smooth Severn stream:
Sabrina is her name: a virgin pure;
Whilom she was the daughter of Locrine,
That had the sceptre from his father Brute.
She, guiltless damsel, flying the mad pursuit
Of her enragèd stepdame, Guendolen,
Commended her fair innocence to the flood
That stayed her flight with his cross-flowing course.
The water-nymphs, that in the bottom played,
Held up their pearled wrists, and took her in,
Bearing her straight to aged Nereus' hall;
Who, piteous of her woes, reared her lank head,
And gave her to his daughters to imbathe

In nectared lavers strewed with asphodil,
And through the porch and inlet of each sense
Dropt in ambrosial oils, till she revived,
And underwent a quick immortal change,
Made Goddess of the river. Still she retains
Her maiden gentleness, and oft at eve
Visits the herds along the twilight meadows,
Helping all urchin blasts, and ill-luck signs
That the shrewd meddling elf delights to make,
Which she with precious vialed liquors heals:
For which the shepherds, at their festivals,
Carol her goodness loud in rustic lays,
And throw sweet garland wreaths into her stream
Of pansies, pinks, and gaudy daffodils.
And, as the old swain said, she can unlock
The clasping charm, and thaw the numbing spell,
If she be right invoked in warbled song;
For maidenhood she loves, and will be swift
To aid a virgin, such as was herself,
In hard-besetting need. This will I try,
And add the power of some adjuring verse.

*Song.*

Sabrina fair,
Listen where thou art sitting
Under the glassy, cool, translucent wave,
In twisted braids of lilies knitting
The loose train of thy amber-dropping hair;
Listen for dear honour's sake,
Goddess of the silver lake,
Listen and save!

Listen, and appear to us,
In name of great Oceanus.
By the earth-shaking Neptune's mace,
And Tethys' grave majestic pace;
By hoary Nereus' wrinkled look,
And the Carpathian wizard's hook;
By scaly Triton's winding shell,
And old soothsaying Glaucus' spell;
By Leucothea's lovely hands,
And her son that rules the strands;
By Thetis' tinsel-slippered feet,
And the songs of Sirens sweet;
By dead Parthenope's dear tomb,
And fair Ligea's golden comb,
Wherewith she sits on diamond rocks
Sleeking her soft alluring locks;
By all the Nymphs that nightly dance
Upon thy streams with wily glance;
Rise, rise, and heave thy rosy head
From thy coral-paven bed,
And bridle in thy headlong wave,
Till thou our summons answered have.
Listen and save!

SABRINA *rises, attended by Water-nymphs, and sings.*

By the rushy-fringèd bank,
Where grows the willow and the osier dank,
My sliding chariot stays,
Thick set with agate, and the azurn sheen
Of turkis blue, and emerald green,
That in the channel strays;

Whilst from off the waters fleet
Thus I set my printless feet
O'er the cowslip's velvet head,
That bends not as I tread.
Gentle swain, at thy request
I am here!
*Spir.* Goddess dear,
We implore thy powerful hand
To undo the charmèd band
Of true virgin here distressed
Through the force and through the wile
Of unblessed enchanter vile.
*Sabr.* Shepherd, 't is my office best
To help ensnarèd chastity.
Brightest Lady, look on me.
Thus I sprinkle on thy breast
Drops that from my fountain pure
I have kept of precious cure;
Thrice upon thy finger's tip,
Thrice upon thy rubied lip:
Next this marble venomed seat,
Smeared with gums of glutinous heat,
I touch with chaste palms moist and cold.
Now the spell hath lost his hold;
And I must haste ere morning hour
To wait in Amphitrite's bower.

SABRINA *descends, and the* LADY *rises out of her seat.*

*Spir.* Virgin, daughter of Locrine,
Sprung of old Anchises' line,

May thy brimmèd waves for this
Their full tribute never miss
From a thousand petty rills,
That tumble down the snowy hills:
Summer drouth or singèd air
Never scorch thy tresses fair,
Nor wet October's torrent flood
Thy molten crystal fill with mud;
May thy billows roll ashore
The beryl and the golden ore;
May thy lofty head be crowned
With many a tower and terrace round,
And here and there thy banks upon
With groves of myrrh and cinnamon.
Come, Lady; while Heaven lends us grace,
Let us fly this cursèd place,
Lest the sorcerer us entice
With some other new device.
Not a waste or needless sound
Till we come to holier ground.
I shall be your faithful guide
Through this gloomy covert wide;
And not many furlongs thence
Is your Father's residence,
Where this night are met in state
Many a friend to gratulate
His wished presence, and beside
All the swains that there abide
With jigs and rural dance resort.
We shall catch them at their sport,
And our sudden coming there

Will double all their mirth and cheer.
Come, let us haste; the stars grow high,
But Night sits monarch yet in the mid sky.

*The Scene changes, presenting Ludlow Town, and the President's Castle: then come in Country Dancers; after them the* ATTENDANT SPIRIT, *with the two* BROTHERS *and the* LADY.

*Song.*

*Spir.* Back, shepherds, back! Enough your play
Till next sun-shine holiday.
Here be, without duck or nod,
Other trippings to be trod
Of lighter toes, and such court guise
As Mercury did first devise
With the mincing Dryades
On the lawns and on the leas.

*The second Song presents them to their Father and Mother.*

Noble Lord and Lady bright,
I have brought ye new delight.
Here behold so goodly grown
Three fair branches of your own.
Heaven hath timely tried their youth,
Their faith, their patience, and their truth,
And sent them here through hard assays
With a crown of deathless praise,
To triumph in victorious dance
O'er sensual folly and intemperance.

*The dances ended, the* SPIRIT *epiloguizes.*

*Spir.* To the ocean now I fly,
And those happy climes that lie
Where day never shuts his eye,
Up in the broad fields of the sky.
There I suck the liquid air,
All amidst the gardens fair
Of Hesperus, and his daughters three
That sing about the golden tree.
Along the crispèd shades and bowers
Revels the spruce and jocund Spring;
The Graces and the rosy-bosomed Hours
Thither all their bounties bring.
There eternal Summer dwells;
And west winds with musky wing
About the cedarn alleys fling
Nard and cassia's balmy smells.
Iris there with humid bow
Waters the odorous banks, that blow
Flowers of more mingled hue
Than her purfled scarf can shew,
And drenches with Elysian dew
(List, mortals, if your ears be true)
Beds of hyacinth and roses,
Where young Adonis oft reposes,
Waxing well of his deep wound,
In slumber soft, and on the ground
Sadly sits the Assyrian queen.
But far above, in spangled sheen,
Celestial Cupid, her famed son, advanced

Holds his dear Psyche, sweet entranced
After her wandering labours long,
Till free consent the gods among
Make her his eternal bride,
And from her fair unspotted side
Two blissful twins are to be born,
Youth and Joy; so Jove hath sworn.
But now my task is smoothly done:
I can fly, or I can run,
Quickly to the green earth's end,
Where the bowed welkin slow doth bend,
And from thence can soar as soon
To the corners of the moon.
Mortals, that would follow me,
Love Virtue; she alone is free.
She can teach ye how to climb
Higher than the sphery chime;
Or, if Virtue feeble were,
Heaven itself would stoop to her.

# LYCIDAS.

In this Monody the Author bewails a learned Friend, unfortunately drowned in his passage from Chester on the Irish Seas, 1637; and, by occasion, foretells the ruin of our corrupted Clergy, then in their height.

YET once more, O ye laurels, and once more,
Ye myrtles brown, with ivy never sere,
I come to pluck your berries harsh and crude,
And with forced fingers rude
Shatter your leaves before the mellowing year.
Bitter constraint and sad occasion dear
Compels me to disturb your season due;
For Lycidas is dead, dead ere his prime,
Young Lycidas, and hath not left his peer.
Who would not sing for Lycidas? he knew
Himself to sing, and build the lofty rhyme.
He must not float upon his watery bier
Unwept, and welter to the parching wind,
Without the meed of some melodious tear.
Begin, then, Sisters of the sacred well
That from beneath the seat of Jove doth spring;
Begin, and somewhat loudly sweep the string.
Hence with denial vain and coy excuse:
So may some gentle Muse
With lucky words favour *my* destined urn,
And as he passes turn,
And bid fair peace be to my sable shroud!

For we were nursed upon the self-same hill,
Fed the same flock, by fountain, shade, and rill;
Together both, ere the high lawns appeared
Under the opening eyelids of the Morn,
We drove a-field, and both together heard
What time the grey-fly winds her sultry horn,
Battening our flocks with the fresh dews of night,
Oft till the star that rose at evening bright
Toward heaven's descent had sloped his westering wheel.
Meanwhile the rural ditties were not mute;
Tempered to the oaten flute,
Rough Satyrs danced, and Fauns with cloven heel
From the glad sound would not be absent long;
And old Damœtas loved to hear our song.

But, oh! the heavy change, now thou art gone,
Now thou art gone and never must return!
Thee, Shepherd, thee the woods and desert caves,
With wild thyme and the gadding vine o'ergrown,
And all their echoes, mourn.
The willows, and the hazel copses green,
Shall now no more be seen
Fanning their joyous leaves to thy soft lays.
As killing as the canker to the rose,
Or taint-worm to the weanling herds that graze,
Or frost to flowers, that their gay wardrobe wear,
When first the white-thorn blows;
Such, Lycidas, thy loss to shepherd's ear.

Where were ye, Nymphs, when the remorseless deep
Closed o'er the head of your loved Lycidas?
For neither were ye playing on the steep
Where your old bards, the famous Druids, lie,

Nor on the shaggy top of Mona high,
Nor yet where Deva spreads her wizard stream.
Ay me! I fondly dream
"Had ye been there," . . . for what could that have done?
What could the Muse herself that Orpheus bore,
The Muse herself, for her enchanting son,
Whom universal nature did lament,
When, by the rout that made the hideous roar,
His gory visage down the stream was sent,
Down the swift Hebrus to the Lesbian shore?
Alas! what boots it with uncessant care
To tend the homely, slighted, shepherd's trade,
And strictly meditate the thankless Muse?
Were it not better done, as others use,
To sport with Amaryllis in the shade,
Or with the tangles of Neæra's hair?
Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise
(That last infirmity of noble mind)
To scorn delights and live laborious days;
But, the fair guerdon when we hope to find,
And think to burst out into sudden blaze,
Comes the blind Fury with the abhorrèd shears,
And slits the thin-spun life. "But not the praise,"
Phœbus replied, and touched my trembling ears:
"Fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil,
Nor in the glistering foil
Set off to the world, nor in broad rumour lies,
But lives and spreads aloft by those pure eyes
And perfect witness of all-judging Jove;
As he pronounces lastly on each deed,
Of so much fame in heaven expect thy meed."

O fountain Arethuse, and thou honoured flood,
Smooth-sliding Mincius, crowned with vocal reeds,
That strain I heard was of a higher mood.
But now my oat proceeds,
And listens to the Herald of the Sea,
That came in Neptune's plea.
He asked the waves, and asked the felon winds,
What hard mishap hath doomed this gentle swain?
And questioned every gust of rugged wings
That blows from off each beakèd promontory.
They knew not of his story;
And sage Hippotades their answer brings,
That not a blast was from his dungeon strayed:
The air was calm, and on the level brine
Sleek Panope with all her sisters played.
It was that fatal and perfidious bark,
Built in the eclipse, and rigged with curses dark,
That sunk so low that sacred head of thine.

Next, Camus, reverend sire, went footing slow,
His mantle hairy, and his bonnet sedge,
Inwrought with figures dim, and on the edge
Like to that sanguine flower inscribed with woe.
"Ah! who hath reft," quoth he, "my dearest pledge?"
Last came, and last did go,
The Pilot of the Galilean Lake;
Two massy keys he bore of metals twain
(The golden opes, the iron shuts amain).
He shook his mitred locks, and stern bespake:—
"How well could I have spared for thee, young swain,
Enow of such as, for their bellies' sake,
Creep, and intrude, and climb into the fold!

Of other care they little reckoning make
Than how to scramble at the shearers' feast,
And shove away the worthy bidden guest.
Blind mouths! that scarce themselves know how to hold
A sheep-hook, or have learnt aught else the least
That to the faithful herdman's art belongs!
What recks it them? What need they? They are sped:
And, when they list, their lean and flashy songs
Grate on their scrannel pipes of wretched straw;
The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed,
But, swoln with wind and the rank mist they draw,
Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread;
Besides what the grim wolf with privy paw
Daily devours apace, and nothing said.
But that two-handed engine at the door
Stands ready to smite once, and smite no more."
Return, Alpheus; the dread voice is past
That shrunk thy streams; return Sicilian Muse,
And call the vales, and bid them hither cast
Their bells and flowerets of a thousand hues.
Ye valleys low, where the mild whispers use
Of shades, and wanton winds, and gushing brooks,
On whose fresh lap the swart star sparely looks,
Throw hither all your quaint enamelled eyes,
That on the green turf suck the honeyed showers,
And purple all the ground with vernal flowers.
Bring the rathe primrose that forsaken dies,
The tufted crow-toe, and pale jessamine,
The white pink, and the pansy freaked with jet,
The glowing violet,
The musk-rose, and the well-attired woodbine,

With cowslips wan that hang the pensive head,
And every flower that sad embroidery wears;
Bid amaranthus all his beauty shed,
And daffadillies fill their cups with tears,
To strew the laureate hearse where Lycid lies.
For so, to interpose a little ease,
Let our frail thoughts dally with false surmise,
Ay me! whilst thee the shores and sounding seas
Wash far away, where'er thy bones are hurled;
Whether beyond the stormy Hebrides,
Where thou perhaps under the whelming tide
Visit'st the bottom of the monstrous world;
Or whether thou, to our moist vows denied,
Sleep'st by the fable of Bellerus old,
Where the great Vision of the guarded mount
Looks toward Namancos and Bayona's hold.
Look homeward, Angel, now, and melt with ruth:
And, O ye dolphins, waft the hapless youth.

Weep no more, woeful shepherds, weep no more,
For Lycidas, your sorrow, is not dead,
Sunk though he be beneath the watery floor.
So sinks the day-star in the ocean bed,
And yet anon repairs his drooping head,
And tricks his beams, and with new-spangled ore
Flames in the forehead of the morning sky:
So Lycidas sunk low, but mounted high,
Through the dear might of Him that walked the waves,
Where, other groves and other streams along,
With nectar pure his oozy locks he laves,
And hears the unexpressive nuptial song,
In the blest kingdoms meek of joy and love.

There entertain him all the Saints above,
In solemn troops, and sweet societies,
That sing, and singing in their glory move,
And wipe the tears for ever from his eyes.
Now, Lycidas, the shepherds weep no more;
Henceforth thou art the Genius of the shore,
In thy large recompense, and shalt be good
To all that wander in that perilous flood.

Thus sang the uncouth swain to the oaks and rills,
While the still morn went out with sandals grey:
He touched the tender stops of various quills,
With eager thought warbling his Doric lay:
And now the sun had stretched out all the hills,
And now was dropt into the western bay.
At last he rose, and twitched his mantle blue:
To-morrow to fresh woods, and pastures new.

# NOTES.

## ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE NOTES.

Abbott, Abbott's *Shakespearian Grammar* (1888); *C.*, *Comus*; *Cent. Dict.*, *The Century Dictionary*; *Class. Dict.*, — any good Classical Dictionary will serve, but perhaps Gayley's *Classic Myths* will best suit the needs of secondary students; *F. Q.*, Spenser's *Faerie Queene*; *Il P.*, *Il Penseroso*; *L'Al.*, *L'Allegro*; *Lyc.*, *Lycidas*; *Nat.*, *On the Morning of Christ's Nativity*; *New Eng. Dict.*, *The New English Dictionary*; *P. L.*, *Paradise Lost*; *P. R.*, *Paradise Regained*; *R. of L.*, Shakspere's *Rape of Lucrece*; *S. A.*, *Samson Agonistes*; Schmidt, Schmidt's *Shakespeare-Lexicon* (1886); *Stand. Dict.*, *The Standard Dictionary*; *V. and A.*, Shakspere's *Venus and Adonis*. The following abbreviations of the names of Shakspere's plays will be easily understood: *A. Y. L.*, *Cor.*, *Cymb.*, *Ham.*, *Hen. V.*, *2 Hen. VI.*, *3 Hen. VI.*, *Hen. VIII.*, *Lear*, *L. L. L.*, *Macb.*, *M. N. D.*, *M. of V.*, *Much Ado*, *M. W.*, *Oth.*, *R. and J.*, *Rich. II.*, *Rich. III.*, *T. A.*, *Temp.*, *T. G. of V.*, *T. N.*, *T. of S.*, *W. T.* The references to Shakspere's works are all to the "Globe" edition; those to Milton's works are to Masson's "Library Edition."

# NOTES.

## L'ALLEGRO.

**L'Allegro** and **Il Penseroso,** owing to their close relation in form and matter, should be read together. Although they were not printed until 1645, they seem to have been written much earlier, probably about 1632 or 1633, at Horton, where Milton had retired from Cambridge after taking his M.A. degree. The titles are from the Italian, and imply "the cheerful man" and "the thoughtful man." Much discussion has arisen among editors and critics as to the import of these poems, which the want of space prevents us from considering. Perhaps, after all, it will be best for the student to work out his own theory of the matter, and then correct and supplement it by consulting the Introduction to this and the standard editions. Milton, in the composition of these poems, seems to have been indebted for a few slight hints and suggestions, in addition to those pointed out in the notes, to some verses entitled *The Author's Abstract of Melancholy*, prefixed to Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, and to a song beginning "Hence, all you vain delights," in Fletcher's play of *The Nice Valour*.

1 2. **Cerberus.** Who was Cerberus? In classical mythology Erebus was the spouse of Night, but Milton, in order to have Melancholy inspire horror and repulsion, invented the present genealogy.

1 3. **Stygian cave.** The den of Cerberus was on the further bank of the Styx, the chief river of the nether world, and in front of it were landed all the shades ferried over by Charon. Browne takes *Stygian* here in the sense of "detested." For *Styx*, *cf. P. L.* ii. 577; also *Stygian darkness*, *C.* 132.

1 4. **Shapes.** *Cf. Il P.* 6, *C.* 207. When we note the indefiniteness of the images in this line, we recall that marvelous description of Death in *P. L.* ii. 666–673, and Coleridge's remark in his *Lectures and Notes on Shakspere* (Bohn ed.), p. 91: "The grandest efforts of poetry are

where the imagination is called forth, not to produce a distinct form, but a strong working of the mind, still offering what is still repelled, and again creating what is again rejected; the result being what the poet wishes to impress, namely, the substitution of a sublime feeling of the unimaginable for a mere image." In the present line the alliteration is also suggestive.

1 5. **Uncouth.** Radically it means "not known, not familiar, strange, and hence perplexing, filling the soul with dismal apprehensions" (Schmidt); elsewhere (*Lyc.* 186, *P. L.* v. 98, vi. 362) Milton seems to have had in mind both the radical and the derived meanings of the word. For the latter, see *Cent. Dict.*

1 6. **Brooding.** If taken literally, with an allusion in *jealous wings* to "the watch which fowls keep when they are sitting" (Warburton), we should expect *her* instead of *his*, but *brooding* rather means "overshadowing," and *his* is then accounted for by supposing that Milton had in mind the classical Erebus (Hales). Of what is Darkness jealous?

1 7. **Night-raven.** Probably the ill-omened raven is meant, although it is not a night bird. *Cf. Much Ado* ii. 3. 84.

1 9. **Ragged.** Rugged, uneven. Though used but once in Milton's poetry, the word is elsewhere not infrequently found as an epithet for rocks; *cf. Isaiah* ii. 21, *T. G. of V.* i. 2. 121, etc.

1 10. **Cimmerian desert.** "She [the ship] came to the limits of the world, to the deep-flowing Oceanus. There is the land and the city of the Cimmerians, shrouded in mist and cloud, and never does the shining sun look down on them with his rays, neither when he climbs up the starry heavens, nor when again he turns earthward from the firmament, but deadly night is outspread over miserable mortals." — *Odyssey* xi. 13–19 (Butcher and Lang). They were "known afterwards as a historical people, figuring round and near the Black Sea (whence the name *Crimea*)" (Masson). *Dark* is added for emphasis. What means has Milton employed in the first ten lines to give us such a repugnant picture of Melancholy?

1 11. **Fair and free.** Almost a set phrase among poets to denote beauty and grace in women. In this case, however, *free* may mean "free from care"; *cf.* 13, also *Oth.* iii. 3. 340. Why do we have a different meter here?

1 12. **Yclept.** Called; see Lounsbury, *Hist. of Eng. Lang.*, pp. 387–390.

1 15. **Two sister Graces.** See *Class. Dict.* for the names and attributes of the three Graces. The parentage here (14–16) given is found

in a comment by Servius on *Æneid* i. 720 (Keightley), while the one that follows (17–24) is, perhaps, Milton's own invention.

1 16. **Ivy-crownèd Bacchus.** See *Class. Dict.*; *cf. C.* 54–55.

1 17. **Or whether,** etc. Note the change in construction here, — rather frequent in Milton.

**As some sager sing.** If, as seems probable, this alternative genealogy is the invention of Milton, the present phrase seems to be a device for modestly recommending it to others, — at any rate no one has yet discovered who these *sager* poets are. How do you parse *sager?*

1 18. **Frolic.** Frolicsome; *cf. C.* 59. *Breathes* is used transitively.

1 20. **A-Maying.** For the explanation of this form, consult the *New Eng. Dict., s.v. A, prep.* This is one of the many allusions in English prose and poetry to the May festivities, for an account of which see Chambers, *Book of Days.*

2 22. **Fresh-blown roses,** etc. *Cf. T. of S.* ii. 1. 174.

2 24. **Buxom, blithe, and debonair.** Distinguish; note word origins. Observe the different arrangement of the words in Thomas Randolph's *Aristippus* (1635): "To make one blithe, buxome, and deboneer" (quoted by Todd).

2 26–28. **Jest,** etc. Consult a good dictionary and write a note on these lines, explaining Milton's nice distinctions. *Wreathèd* is a transferred epithet; *wanton* here means "playful." Look up etymology of *wanton.*

2 28. **Nods and becks,** etc. Do you suppose Milton thought out this combination, or did he remember the line quoted by Warton from Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy?* "With becks, and nods, and smiles again."

2 29. **Hebe.** See *Class. Dict.*; *cf. C.* 290.

2 31. **Derides.** Subject?

2 32. **Laughter,** etc. Addison thought this "a very poetical figure of laughter"; *cf. Comb.* i. 6. 68–69.

2 33. **Come, and trip it,** etc. *Cf. Temp.* iv. 1. 44–47, *C.* 143–144, 960–962; contrast *Il P.* 37 *et seq.* *Fantastic,* because the movements of the dance are to be whimsical and capricious. How many different functions has the pronoun *it,* and which one of these is here illustrated?

2 36. **Mountain-nymph.** "I suppose Liberty is called *the mountain nymph,* because the people in mountainous countries have generally preserved their liberties longest, as the Britons formerly in Wales, and the inhabitants in the mountains of Switzerland at this day" (Newton). "Or does he refer to the absence of conventional restraints and general

sense of unconfinement that belong to mountains?" (Hales). Or does he, as Warton thought, merely mean to call Liberty an Oread, a nymph of mountains and grottos? If the last, the poet is again modifying ancient mythology to suit his pleasure, for, as Hales reminds us, "No such nymph is found amongst the acknowledged Oreads and Orodemniads of the Greeks." Why *in thy right hand?*

2 38. **Crew.** Milton uses this word twenty-one times in his poems, and, with the exception of its use in this line, always in a bad sense. *Cf. C.* 653, 805, *P. L.* i. 51, 477, 688, 751, etc.

2 40. **Unreprovèd.** Unreprovable; *cf. C.* 395, 793, and see Abbott, § 375. The arrangement of the adjectives in this line is imitated from the Greek, and is a common device in Milton. Make a list of the examples found in the poems in this volume, and try to ascertain the force of the final adjective in each case.

2–3 41–68. "This passage," says Trent, "... describes by a series of exquisite though unelaborated pictures the pleasures of a cheerful man abroad early on a delightful morning. It is plain ... that Milton is describing an ideal day, rather than one belonging to a particular season. Minute critics have succeeded in showing that some of the pictures are not entirely true to nature; but they waste their time, for Milton has surely imbibed nature's spirit, and his poem lives, as all true poetry does, by the spirit rather than by the letter." But is it best to cloak these faults? Is it not better to say that Milton's work has lived in spite of, rather than because of, them? The highest art assuredly excludes them, and in Milton's finest passages there are no blemishes of any sort.

2–3 41–44, 57–76. With these lines Van Dyke compares the last seventeen lines of the fourth stanza of Tennyson's *Ode to Memory*, and observes: "Here are the same breadth of vision, delicacy of touch, atmospheric effect; the same sensitiveness to the simplest variations of light and sound; the same power to shed over the quiet scenery of the English country the light of an ideal beauty. It is an art far beyond that of the landscape painter, and all the more perfect because so well concealed." — *Poetry of Tennyson* (sec. ed.), p. 62.

2 42. **The dull night.** *Cf. Hen. V.* iv. 1. 11. One editor notes that Il Penseroso could not have used the epithet *dull* so appropriately as L'Allegro. Why not?

2 43. **From his watch-tower.** "The lark sees the dawn sooner than the dull night which grovels on the earth, because he is high up in his 'watchtower'" (Elton). Is *-tower* one or two syllables here?

2 44. **The dappled dawn.** *Cf. Much Ado* v. 3. 25–27. Pronounce *dappled*.

2 45. **Then to come,** etc. This passage is obscure. (1) It may mean that the lark is to come to L'Allegro's window and bid him "good-morrow." In this case we must make *to come* and *bid* depend on *to hear* (41), and suppose that the unusual *to* before *come* is made necessary by the distance between it and the governing verb. But such a construction is awkward. The interpretation, moreover, forces us to make the phrase *in spite of sorrow* almost meaningless by applying it to the lark; it makes it difficult to account for L'Allegro seeing the performance of the cock described below (51–52); and, finally, obliges us to suppose Milton ignorant of the lark's habits, since the bird never approaches human habitations, — an ignorance we are not justified in assuming if the passage can be explained in some other way. (2) Another interpretation makes *to come* and *bid* depend on *admit* (38). "Awakened by the lark, the poet, after listening to that early song, arises to give a blithe good-morrow at his window. Other matin sounds are heard, and he goes forth," etc. (Browne). Those who adopt this view explain that he bids "good-morrow" to "the rising morn," "the new day," or "the world in general." (3) Masson, however, thinks that L'Allegro is already out of doors. "Milton, or whoever the imaginary speaker is, asks Mirth to admit him to her company and that of the nymph Liberty, and to let him enjoy the pleasures natural to such companionship (38–40). He then goes on to specify such pleasures, or to give examples of them. The first (41–44) is that of the sensations of early morning, when, walking round a country cottage, one hears the song of the mounting skylark, welcoming the signs of sunrise. The second is that of coming to the cottage window, looking in, and bidding a cheerful good-morrow, through the sweet-briar, vine, or eglantine, to those of the family who are also astir." This last interpretation is perhaps more in keeping with the good-hearted sociability of L'Allegro's character. But see Pattison, *Milton*, p. 23.

2 45. **In spite of sorrow.** Out of spite towards sorrow. *In spite of* usually means "notwithstanding"; see Schmidt. Masson hints at "a subtle reference to some recent grief that had been in the special cottage in view."

2 47–48. **Sweet-briar . . . eglantine.** "As these are now, with strict botanists, names for the same plant (*Rosa rubigenosa*), Warton supposes that by 'the twisted eglantine' Milton meant the honeysuckle; Mr. Keightley, more accurately, suggests the dog-rose (*Rosa canina*).

. . . Popularly, several of the smaller-flowered kinds of wild-rose, besides the sweet-briar, are still called eglantine" (Masson). "A close observer of things around us would not speak of the eglantine as twisted" (Pattison).

2 50. **Scatters the rear,** etc. Name and explain the figure. What does *thin* limit?

3 52. **Stoutly struts,** etc. What does Milton try to effect by the rhythm of this line? Contrast with that of l. 51.

3 53. **Oft listening,** etc. The bounds of the poet's pleasures now begin to enlarge. Pronounce *listening*, *slumbering* (54).

3 55. **Some hoar hill.** Can you think of more than one meaning for the epithet *hoar?*

3 56. **The high wood.** Explain. Ll. 55–56 "may mean either that the music of hound and horn echoes shrill through the high wood on the hillside, or that the huntsmen and dogs begin on the hillside and then go 'echoing' through the 'high wood.' . . . The latter interpretation seems the more poetical, as the elements of time and motion are introduced; it also throws an ictus on 'high' that improves the verse metrically" (Trent).

3 57. **Walking, not unseen.** "Happy men love witnesses of their joy: the splenetic love solitude" (Hurd, quoted by Todd). Contrast *Il P.* 65. Browne reminds us that "Some particulars of the following description of morning are taken from Browne's Britannia's Pastorals (Book IV, v. 75)."

3 59. **The eastern gate.** *Cf. M. N. D.* iii. 2. 391. *Right against*, etc., modifies *walking*, and implies that L'Allegro has his course directed toward the rising sun. Elton comments on "the magnificent sound" of ll. 59–62. "Milton once or twice in these two poems," he says, "seems to quit the tone of gracious fantasy which he has laid down for them, and to 'somewhat loudly sweep the string.' But the fanciful word 'liveries' brings him back again."

3 60. **His state.** "His stately progress" (Keightley), referring of course to the gorgeousness of the spectacle.

3 62. **In thousand liveries dight.** "*Liveries* seems to be plainly used of the clouds because they are regarded as servants or attendants of the sun, not because of the various hues displayed" (Trent). Look up the history of the word, and *cf. M. of V.* ii. 1. 2. *Dight*, arrayed. *Cf. Il P.* 159. Explain the figure in *thousand.*

3 65–68. **And the milkmaid,** etc. What do you notice about the movement of these lines? How is this effect secured?

3 67. **Tells his tale.** Counts the number of his sheep (Warton, on the suggestion of Headley). For *tell* meaning "count," and *tale* meaning "number," see *Psalm* xlviii. 12, *Exodus* v. 8, though it must be confessed that when *tell* and *tale* are combined, as in the present passage, "the almost invariable meaning is to narrate something" (Keightley). In view of this last fact, *tells his tale* is also interpreted as "relates his story," — *tale* being taken either in the general sense of "any story" or in the particular sense of "a love-tale." "But (1) this [particular sense] would be a somewhat abrupt use of the word *tale*. (2) The *every* shows that some piece of business is meant. (3) The context too shows that. (4) The early dawn is scarcely the time for love-making. Some of these objections, but not all, are obviated by taking *tale* in a general sense" (Hales). Do you think of any modern uses of the words *tell* and *tale* which help to explain the passage?

3 69. **Straight.** Straightway. These *new pleasures* belong to a later hour than those described in the preceding lines. Of ll. 69–80 Palgrave writes: "This is perhaps as near a landscape in words — and those words always *the* words — as one can find anywhere: Nature by herself, no sympathy with man suggested; Yet note how the one final imaginative phrase in its utter loveliness transports us at once within the sphere of human feeling." — See *Landscape in Poetry*, pp 158–159.

3 70. **Landskip.** The first and second editions have *lantskip* (Masson). Read this line so as to show the antecedent of *it*. What does *round* limit?

3 71. **Russet lawns,** etc. "*Lawn* now commonly means a stretch of green grass in front of a mansion; but the epithet 'russet' (reddish) shows that Milton . . . understood it rather in its original sense of *land* or *laund*, any open space, even if moory. . . . A *fallow* is a piece of ploughed land left unsown" (Masson). Verity has a long note in which he tries to show that *russet lawns* and *fallows grey* "mean much the same thing, and that Milton is thinking of the 'ash-coloured' appearance presented by a hill-side where the grass is short and poor of quality." With what are *lawns*, *fallows*, *mountains*, etc., in apposition?

3 73. **Mountains.** See *Milton's Poetical Works* (Masson), Vol. I. pp. 132–133, for a splendid comment on the visionary scenery of *L'Al.* and *Il P.* There are no mountains in the vicinity of Horton, where Milton probably wrote these poems.

3 74. **Labouring clouds.** Why the epithet?

3 75. **Meadows trim,** etc. For *trim*, *cf. Il P.* 50, *C.* 120; for *daisies*

*pied*, see the fine lines in *L. L. L.* v. 2. 904–907. Note the position of the adjectives in ll. 71, 75, 76, 126, etc.

3 77. **Towers and battlements.** These, says Masson, "are almost evidently Windsor Castle."

3 79. **Lies.** Lodges, dwells; *cf. Cor.* i. 9. 82.

3 80. **Cynosure.** An object to which all eyes are turned; a metaphorical meaning. The word (which literally means "dog's tail," κυνὸς οὐρα) was anciently applied to that part of the Lesser Bear which contains the pole-star, because it was then thought that constellation resembled a dog. It was by this constellation that the Phœnician mariners steered their course, while the Greek mariners steered by the Greater Bear. *Cf. C.* 341–342.

4 83–88. **Corydon and Thyrsis . . . Phillis . . . Thestylis.** Names of frequent occurrences in pastoral poetry, here applied, somewhat incongruously perhaps, to English rustics. Note the time of day indicated in these lines.

4 89. **If the earlier season lead.** *Lead* is probably used intransitively. *She goes* may be understood with l. 90.

4 90. **Tanned haycock.** Why *tanned?*

4 91. **Secure.** Not "safe," but "free from care" (Latin *securus*). Browne quotes Ben Jonson, *Epode:* "Men may securely sin, but safely never." Here, as in l. 69, the scene is shifted and a new paragraph begun.

4 92. **Upland hamlets.** "Little villages among the slopes, away from the river-meadows and the haymaking" (Masson). Contrast *towered cities*, 117.

4 94. **Rebeck.** "A loud and harsh lute-shaped medieval musical instrument, the earliest form of the violin, with one, two, or three strings, and played with a bow" (*Stand. Dict.*). For some interesting facts about the instrument, see Verity. It may be worth noting that Shakspere calls one of the musicians in *R. and J.* (iv. 5. 135) Hugh Rebeck. What is really *jocund?*

4 96. **Chequered shade.** Explain; *cf. T. A.* ii. 3. 15.

4 97. **Come.** What part of the verb?

4 98. **Sunshine holiday.** *Cf. C.* 959.

4 100. **Spicy nut-brown ale.** Hales thinks with Warton that this is the "gossips' bowl" of Shakspere (*cf. M. N. D.* ii. 1. 47), a drink made up of "ale, nutmeg, sugar, toast, and roasted crabs or apples."

4 102. **Mab.** See the description of her in *R. and J.* i. 4. 53–95; also the one in Ben Jonson's *The Satyr*. *Junkets*, sweetmeats, dainties.

Originally the word (from Ital. *guincata*) meant "a cream cheese," so called because it was served on rushes (Ital. *guinco*, a rush). "Of course Queen Mab eat the junkets to punish the inmates of the house for untidiness" (Verity).

4 103. **She.** One of the persons telling stories. She relates an experience she has had with the fairies, who *pinched and pulled* her, it may be, for untidy work.

4 104. **And he,** etc. And he, *i.e.*, the one who had once been led by the Friar's lantern, tells how, etc. A second interpretation connects l. 104 with l. 103: *She* said she was pinched and pulled, and *he* said he was led by Friar's lantern. L. 105 would then begin a new story, the verb *tells* having for its subject *he* understood. Browne suggests "a colon at *led* and would read *Tales* for *Tells* in line 105, thus carrying on the sense from *stories* (line 101) to *tales* (line 105)." If the reading in the second edition, *And by the Friar's lantern led*, were adopted, the speaker throughout would be the same, *i.e.*, *she* in l. 103. The latter is defended by Verity; to me, however, the first interpretation seems the most natural.

4 104. **Friar's lantern.** Keightley, followed by several editors, charges Milton with having confused two different spirits; Friar Rush, the house-spirit, and Will-o'-the-Wisp or Jack-o'-the-Lanthorn, the field-spirit. But Verity says: "It is possible however that Milton is not referring to either spirit, but that *friar* of l. 104 is identical with the *goblin* (*i.e.*, Robin Goodfellow) of l. 105. For two reasons: (i) *friar* was a title of Robin Goodfellow. . . . (ii) The trick of misleading with a false light was not confined to Jack-o'-the-Lanthorn."

4 105. **Drudging goblin.** Robin Goodfellow, the Puck of Shakspere. A comparison of Milton's lines with Shakspere's description of Puck in *M. N. D.* ii. 1. 42–57, however, will show that the two poets had quite different conceptions of the sprite. For an extended account of the pranks of Robin Goodfellow, consult Keightley, *Fairy Mythology*, or Brand, *Popular Antiquities of Great Britain.*

4 111. **Chimney.** Fireplace.

4 113. **Crop-full.** With full stomach; see 106. *Flings*, dashes.

5 114. **Matin.** *Cf. P. L.* v. 7.

5 115. **To bed they creep.** Why *creep?*

5 117. **Towered cities please us then.** "The rest of the poem, from this point onward, may be taken as describing the evening reveries, readings, and other recreations, of the imaginary youth in his country-cottage, after his morning's walk and afternoon among the rustics.

The word *then* in this line, as elsewhere in the poem, does important duty" (Masson). But Hales says: "then (not when the tales are over and the tellers in bed, but) = at some other time. He is not describing one long day, but the pleasure which one day or another might entertain L'Allegro." Verity follows Hales, and supposes that L'Allegro "actually takes part in these gay meetings and festivities" (117–134). For a good defense of Masson's interpretation, however, see Trent. Note the new turns given the thought in ll. 131 and 135.

5 120. **Weeds.** Garments; the original meaning of the word. *Cf. C.* 16, 189, 390. *Triumphs*, "a public festivity or exhibition of any kind, particularly a tournament" (Schmidt). In Bacon's Essay *Of Masques and Triumphs*, there is the following treatment of *triumphs:* "For justs, and tourneys, and barriers, the glories of them are chiefly in the chariots, wherein the challengers make their entry, especially if they be drawn with strange beasts, as lions, bears, camels, and the like; or, in the devices of their entrance, or in bravery of their liveries, or in the goodly furniture of their horses and armour."

5 121. **Store of.** Plenty of, many.

5 122. **Rain influence.** *Influence* here refers to the astrological belief that the stars have an occult power over the affairs of men; in this case, of course, the *eyes* of the ladies are compared to stars. *Cf. Nat.* 71. Explain the construction in 122–123.

5 125. **Hymen.** Warton refers to Ben Jonson's Masque, *Hymenæi:* "On the other hand, entered Hymen (the god of marriage) in a saffron-colour'd robe, his under vestures white, his socks yellow, a yellow veil of silk on his left arm, his head crowned with roses and marjoram, in his right hand a torch of pine-tree." See last scene of *A. Y. L.*

5 127. **Pomp.** "A festival procession" (Schmidt). *Revelry;* Minsheu defines revels as "sports of dauncing, masking, comedies, tragedies, and such like, used in the king's house, the houses of court, or of other great personages" (quoted by Todd).

5 128. **With mask and antique pageantry.** Explain.

5 130. **Haunted.** "By the water-nymphs" (Verity).

5 131–134. **Then to the well-trod stage,** etc. "In those days Milton had no more of the Puritanic aversion to the theatre . . . than to the pomps and solemnities of cathedral ritual." — Garnett, *Milton*, p. 45. *Cf. Il P.* 155–166.

5 132. **Jonson's learned sock.** The *sock* (Latin *soccus*, the low-heeled shoe or slipper worn by comic actors in the ancient Greek and Roman drama) is here used for "comedy," just as the *buskined stage* (the buskin

was the high-heeled boot worn by ancient tragic actors) is used in *Il P.* (102) for "tragedy." At the time *L'Al.* was written, Jonson was poet laureate, and had finished most of the work which entitled him to his high rank among the giants of the Elizabethan age. No characteristic is so generally accorded to him as that of learning, and hence Milton's adjective is as appropriate as Chaucer's "moral Gower" (*Troilus* v. 1856). What the poet says of Shakspere, however, is not so well put. It is all well enough to speak of the *man* as *sweetest Shakespeare*, for he was both the gentlest and the sweetest of mankind, and, taking *Fancy* in the larger meaning it then had, even *Fancy's child* may be admitted, but to characterize Shakspere's comedies (I see no reason for supposing that Milton is referring to only a part of them) as "native wood-notes wild," is to accord to him praise that is altogether inadequate. Despite what has been said by critics in favor of the present passage, and despite the lines *On Shakespeare* (1630), in which he praises principally the dramatist's spontaneity, both his sneer at Charles I. for reading Shakspere (see *Eikonoklastes*) and his Preface to *S. A.* justify us in doubting whether Milton at any time in his life actually appreciated the real greatness of Shakspere.

Milton's lines *On Shakespeare*, which should be compared with Jonson's tributes in the *First Folio* and *Timber*, are as follows:

> "What needs my Shakespeare for his honoured bones
> The labour of an age in pilèd stones?
> Or that his hallowed reliques should be hid
> Under a star-ypointing pyramid?
> Dear son of memory, great heir of fame,
> What need'st thou such weak witness of thy name?
> Thou in our wonder and astonishment
> Hast built thyself a livelong monument.
> For whilst, to the shame of slow-endeavouring art,
> Thy easy numbers flow, and that each heart
> Hath from the leaves of thy unvalued book
> Those Delphic lines with deep impression took,
> Then thou, our fancy of itself bereaving,
> Dost make *us* marble with too much conceiving,
> And so sepúlchred in such pomp dost lie
> That kings for such a tomb would wish to die."

5 135. **Eating cares.** *Cf.* Horace's *mordaces sollicitudines* (*Odes* i. 18. 4) and *curas edaces* (*Odes* ii. 11. 18). Contrast ll. 135–150 with *Il P.* 161–166.

5 136. **Lydian airs.** Music now takes the place of reading, and it is quite natural that L'Allegro should prefer the *soft Lydian airs* to the Dorian or the Phrygian. For *the Dorian mood*, see *P. L.* i. 550–559.

5 137. **Married to immortal verse.** *Cf.* the opening lines of *At a Solemn Music;* also *C.* 516. The present passage is one among many in Milton's poems where music is "married to immortal verse."

5 139. **Bout.** Bend, turn; sometimes used of a serpent's coils. How is the word now used? On this and the following line, see Coleridge, *Lectures and Notes on Shakspere* (Bohn ed.), p. 49, Garnett, *Milton*, p. 156 *et seq.*

5 141. **With wanton heed,** etc. "The adjectives describe the appearance, the nouns the reality" (Browne). The figure is an oxymoron; consult a dictionary and explain.

5 142. **Melting voice.** Why the epithet?

5 144. **The hidden soul,** etc. "In every soul — indeed in all creation — there is harmony, but for the most part it lies imprisoned and bound, so that it cannot be heard. The sweetness of the music described in the text is to be such that it shall set free this prisoner, and make its voice audible" (Hales).

6 145. **Orpheus.** For the beautiful legend of Orpheus and Eurydice, see *Class. Dict.* *Cf. Il P.* 105–108, *Lyc.* 58–63, *P. L.* vii. 34–37.

6 146. **Golden slumber.** Why is the epithet so effective?

6 147. **Elysian flowers.** *Cf. P. L.* iii. 359. Where did ancient mythology locate the Elysian fields? Which of these places best suits the present passage?

6 149. **To have quite set free.** Why *quite*? "In our older English writers, as in our modern colloquial language, the perfect infinitive is used to express a result or a purpose which has not been attained" (Hales).

6 151–152. **These delights,** etc. *Cf.* the last two lines of Marlowe's exquisite lyric, *The Passionate Shepherd to His Love:*

> "If these delights thy mind may move,
> Then live with me, and be my love."

Read Marlowe's poem, together with Sir Walter Raleigh's answer to the same, called *The Nymph's Reply.*

## IL PENSEROSO.

7 1. **Hence,** etc. Milton may have remembered the following lines from Sylvester, *Tragedie of Henry the Great:*

> "Hence, hence, false Pleasures, momentary Joyes:
> Mock us no more with your illuding Toyes."

7 2. **Without father.** "And therefore 'all mother,' as we say, or pure folly" (Rolfe). *Cf.* the parentage given Melancholy in *L'Al.*

7 3. **Bested.** Bestead, help, avail; *cf.* Shakspere's use of *stead, R. and J.* ii. 3. 54.

7 4. **Fixèd mind.** *Cf. P. L.* i. 97; *F. Q.* iv. 7. 16: "Yet nothing could my fixed mind remove." *Toys*, trifles.

7 5. **Idle brain.** Opposed to *fixed mind*, above. *Idle* is here used in its original sense of "empty" (A. S. īdel); *cf.* the use of the word in that fine Old English poem, *The Wanderer*, 87: "eald ęnta geweorc īdlu stōdon."

7 6. **Fond.** Foolish; the meaning most common in Shakspere. See Schmidt; *cf. C.* 67, *Lyc.* 56, *S. A.* 812, etc.

7 7. **As thick,** etc. *Cf.* Chaucer, *Canterbury Tales*, D. 868: "As thikke as motes in the sonne-beem."

7 9. **Likest.** Explain the force of *likest; cf. C.* 237.

7 10. **Pensioners.** Retinue; this metaphorical use was given currency, if it was not, as Warton suggests, originated by Queen Elizabeth's establishment of a select guard called Pensioners. *Cf. M. N. D.* ii. 1. 10, *M. W.* ii. 2. 79. For *Morpheus*, see *Class. Dict.*

7 12. **Melancholy.** Here the word stands for "pensive contemplation."

7 14. **To hit.** To meet, to agree with.

7 15. **Our weaker view.** *Cf. Exodus* xxxiv. 29–35.

7 18. **Prince Memnon's sister.** Milton may refer to Hemera, mentioned by Dictys Cretensis, *De Bello Trojano*, lib. vi. c. 10. As Odysseus describes Eurypylus as the comeliest man he ever saw, next to goodly Memnon (κεῖνον δὴ κάλλιστον ἴδον μετὰ Μέμνονα δῖον, *Odys.* xi. 522), the poet probably supposes that Memnon's sister, although we are nowhere so told, was no less beautiful.

7 19. **Starred Ethiop queen.** Cassiope, wife of Cepheus, and mother of Andromeda. In consequence of her boast (another story has it that she claimed her daughter was fairer than the Nereids), the nymphs

sent a sea-monster to ravage the coast of Ethiopia, and Andromeda was about to be sacrificed to this monster when she was rescued by Perseus. As Cassiope was afterwards placed among the stars, Milton uses the epithet *starred*. See *Class. Dict.*; read Charles Kingsley's *Andromeda*.

7 23. **Bright-haired Vesta.** Milton again invents a genealogy to suit his own purposes. He perhaps regards Saturn as the type of Solitude, and Vesta as the type of Chastity, thus making Melancholy the daughter of Chastity and Solitude. Warton, however, identifies Vesta with Genius, and Browne supposes that Vesta, or Hestia, the goddess of the hearth, is here the symbol of Retirement, while Saturn, the promoter of civilization, represents Culture. For *Saturn*, see *Class. Dict.*, and by all means read at least the opening lines of Keats's *Hyperion*, — a poem which Shelley (Preface to *Adonais*) considered "as second to nothing that was ever produced by a writer of the same years."

8 29. **Woody Ida.** Probably the mountain of that name in the island of Crete is meant. *Cf. P. L.* i. 515.

8 30. **No fear of Jove.** Jupiter led in the dethronement of his father. See *Class. Dict.*; also on *C.* 20. What is the force of *yet* in this line? What other meanings has it?

8 32. **Demure.** See the *first* of the two meanings in *Stand. Dict.* Contrast this line with *L'Al.* 24.

8 33. **All in a robe,** etc. *All* may be either an adjective or an adverb. *Grain*, dye, color, not texture; perhaps the color intended is dark purple. For a lengthy discussion of *grain*, see Marsh, *Lectures on the English Language* (First Series), and Masson's note to *P. L.* v. 285. *Cf. C.* 750, *P. L.* xi. 242.

8 35. **Stole of cypress lawn.** *Stole*, veil or hood (as in *F. Q.* i. 1. 4); note the *stola*, or long, flowing robe of the Roman lady. *Cypress lawn*, crape; but the words are usually distinguished, as in *W. T.* iv. 4. 220–221.

8 36. **Decent.** Probably the word here means "comely," "handsome," though Warton (quoted by Todd) explains it as "Not exposed, therefore *decent*; more especially, as so covered." In the *Deserted Village*, 12, Goldsmith has: "The decent church that topt the neighbouring hill."

8 37. **Thy wonted state.** *State*, dignity of deportment. Warton quotes Ben Jonson, *Cynthia's Revels*, v. 3:

> "Seated in thy silver chair,
> State in wonted manner keep."

8 39. **Commercing.** Having intercourse; perhaps, communing.

8 42. **Forget thyself to marble.** See the lines *On Shakespeare*, quoted in note to *L'Al.* 132. "In both instances, excess of thought is the cause" (Warton, quoted by Todd).

8 43. **Sad leaden downward cast.** *Sad*, grave, serious; *cf. C.* 189. "Leaden-coloured eye-sockets betoken melancholy, or excess of thoughtfulness" (Masson); Verity interprets *leaden* as "gloomy" and Trent thinks it refers "not to color . . . but to weight or heaviness." Verity compares Sylvester, *Du Bartas* (Grosart, i. 155):

> "That swallow-fac't, sad, stooping Nymph, whose eye
> Still on the ground is fixèd stedfastly."

8 44. **As fast.** That is, *as fast* as they were before fixed on the skies.

8 46–48. **Spare Fast,** etc. *Cf.* Milton's *Elegia Sexta* 55–66. Here is Masson's translation:

> "Ay, but whoso will tell of wars and the world at its grandest,
> Heroes of pious worth, demigod leaders of men,
> Singing now of the holy decrees of the great gods above us,
> Now of the realms deep down, guarded by bark of the dog,
> Sparely let such an one still, in the way of the Samian master,
> Live, and let homely herbs furnish his simple repast;
> Near him, in beechen bowl, be only the crystal-clear water;
> Sober draughts let him drink, fetched from the innocent spring;
> Added to this be a youth of conduct chaste and reproachless,
> Morals rigidly strict, hands without sign of a stain:
> All as when thou, white-robed, and lustrous with waters of cleansing,
> Risest, augur, erect, fronting the frown of the gods."

The idea which pervades these lines Masson calls "an eminently Miltonic idea, perhaps pre-eminently *the* Miltonic idea." He cites *C.* 783–789 and a famous passage in the prose *Apology for Smectymnuus*, where it occurs again.

8 47. **Muses.** For the names and the attributes of the nine Muses, see *Class. Dict.*

8 50. **Trim gardens.** *Cf. L'Al.* 75; also *C.* 375–380. "Mr. Warton here observes, that affectation and false elegance were now carried to the most elaborate and absurd excess in gardening" (Todd). At this day we prefer the sort of gardens described in *P. L.* iv. 241–246, where

> "not nice Art
> In beds and curious knots, but Nature boon
> Poured forth profuse on hill, and dale, and plain,
> Both where the morning sun first warmly smote
> The open field, and where the unpierced shade
> Imbrowned the noontide bowers."

8 52. **Golden wing.** *Cf. C.* 214, *Death of a Fair Infant* 57. Verity reminds us that Sylvester had previously applied the epithet to Sleep (Grosart, i. 143).

8 54. **The Cherub Contemplation.** See *Ezekiel* x. (also i.), and *P. L.* vi. 749–759. As Verity remarks, "It is well to remember two things: (i) *Cherub* . . . means a single member of the cherubim. . . . (ii) When Milton applies to the Cherub the title *Contemplation* . . . he is referring to the mediaeval conception of the Hierarchies. . . . According to it each of the Orders or Choirs into which the heavenly beings were divided had a special power, and the faculty peculiar to the Cherubim was that of 'Knowledge and *Contemplation* of divine things.' . . . Milton took the mediaeval belief and grafted it on to the narrative of Ezekiel." The meter requires five syllables for *Contemplation;* see Browne's *Notes on Shakspere's Versification* (Ginn & Company), third edition, p. 18, an excellent little pamphlet to use as an introduction to the study of versification. See *Modern Language Notes*, Vol. XIV. pp. 78–79, for a summary of Professor Tolman's paper on "The Poetic Value of Long Words."

8 55. **The mute Silence hist along.** That is, bid the mute Silence come along by whispering *hist. Hist*, originally an onomatopœic interjection used to enforce silence, is here probably an imperative, although Skeat takes it as a past participle, *i.e.*, "bring along with thee the mute, hushed Silence." Masson paraphrases: "Move through the mute Silence hushingly, or saying Hush!—*i.e.*, telling the Silence to continue—unless the nightingale shall choose to break it by one of her songs." As *Silence* is personified, there is no tautology in adding the epithet *mute.* Read Tennyson's *Reticence*, *Alfred Lord Tennyson*, Vol. II. pp. 87–88.

8 56. **'Less Philomel,** etc. Unless the nightingale will grant a song. For the story of Philomela, see *Class. Dict.*, and for the finest of all the tributes in the English language to the nightingale, read Keats's *Ode to a Nightingale.*

8 57. **Plight.** Define.

9 58. **Smoothing,** etc. *Cf. C.* 251.

9 59. **Cynthia.** See *Class. Dict.*; in ancient mythology it was Ceres whose chariot was drawn by dragons.

9 60. **The accustomed oak.** Explain.

9 61. **Sweet bird,** etc. See Milton's sonnet to the nightingale, *C.* 234, 566, *P. L.* iii. 38, iv. 602, 771, vii. 435. Coleridge, in his *To the Nightingale*, quoted l. 62.

9 63–72. **Thee, chauntress,** etc. After quoting *L'Al.* 69–80 and *Il P.* 63–72, Palgrave observes: "What we gain from Milton, as these specimens in his very purest vein — his essence of landscape — illustrate, is the immense enlargement, the finer proportions, the greater scope, of his scenes from Nature. And with this we have that exquisite style, always noble, always music itself — Mozart without notes — in which Milton is one of the few very greatest masters in all literature: in company — at least it pleases me to fancy — with Homer and Sophocles, with Vergil, with Dante, with Tennyson." — See *Landscape in Poetry*, pp. 158–159.

9 64. **Even-song.** Contrast *L'Al.* 114.

9 65. **Unseen.** Contrast *L'Al.* 57. From the fact that *unseen* is negatived in *L'Al.*, some have supposed that *Il P.* may have been written first. The probability is, however, that the two poems were conceived at the same time and written in their present order. After quoting ll. 65–94, Blair says: "Here there are no unmeaning general expressions; all is particular, all is picturesque; nothing forced or exaggerated; but a simple style, and a collection of strong expressive images, which are all of one class, and recall a number of similar ideas of the melancholy kind: . . . We may observe, too, the conciseness of the poet's manner. He does not rest long on one circumstance, or employ a great many words to describe it; which always makes the impression faint and languid; but placing it in one strong point of view, full and clear before the reader, he then leaves it." — Hugh Blair, *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*, Lecture xl.

9 67. **The wandering moon.** Keightley cites Horace, *Sat.* i. 8. 21: *vaga luna*, and Virgil, *Æn.* i. 742: *errantem lunam*. If Shakspere were living at this hour, he might find reason to congratulate himself on the fact that *he* did not know much Latin. At any rate, no one thinks of accusing him of borrowing his *wandering moon* (*cf. M. N. D.* iv. 1. 102; also ii. 1. 6–7) from Virgil or Horace. See what Stedman says about imaginative diction, *Nature and Elements of Poetry*, p. 240 *et seq.*

9 68. **Her highest noon.** Explain.

9 72. **Stooping,** etc. What optical illusion is referred to?

9 74. **Curfew.** "A regulation in force in mediaeval Europe by which at a fixed hour in the evening, indicated by the ringing of a bell, fires were to be covered over or extinguished; . . . Hence, the practice of

ringing a bell at a fixed hour in the evening, usually eight or nine o'clock, continued after the original purpose was obsolete, and often used as a signal in connection with various municipal or communal regulations; the practice of ringing the evening bell still survives in many towns" (*New Eng. Dict.*). Look up etymology of word. See on *Lyc.* 154.

9 75. **Some wide-watered shore.** Explain. We have here one of Milton's finest double epithets, the construction and use of which is common in his early poems. "In *Comus*, which has a few more than a thousand lines, there are fifty-four double epithets; in *L'Allegro* there are sixteen to a hundred and fifty lines; in *Il Penseroso* there are eleven to one hundred and seventy lines." — Van Dyke, *Poetry of Tennyson* (second edition), p. 64. Coleridge, who was of the opinion that there is a superfluity of double epithets in the early poetry of both Shakspere and Milton, gave the following rule for their admission: "either that they should be already denizens of our language, such as *blood-stained*, *terror-stricken*, *self-applauding*; or when a new epithet, or one found in books only, is hazarded, that it, at least, be one word, not two words made one by mere virtue of the printer's hyphen. . . . If a writer, every time a compounded word suggests itself to him, would seek for some other mode of expressing the same sense, the chances are always greatly in favour of his finding a better word." — *Biographia Literaria* (Bohn ed.), p. 2, note.

9 76. **Swinging slow,** etc. What poetic effect do you notice in this line?

9 77. **Or, if the air,** etc. In *L'Al.* the evening indoors did not begin until l. 117.

9 78. **Removèd.** Remote; *cf. Ham.* i. 4. 61.

9 80. **Teach light,** etc. A gloom which only Rembrandt could paint. *Cf.* the famous passage in *P. L.* i. 62–64, and the hardly less famous one in *F. Q.* i. 1. 14:

> "But forth unto the darksom hole he went,
> And looked in: his glistring armor made
> A little glooming light, much like a shade."

9 82. **The cricket on the hearth.** A line made famous by Dickens. It is now no uncommon thing for an author to find a title for his book in some odd phrase of the old poets; Mr. Howells, for instance, found one in *Lyc.* 188.

9 83. **The bellman's drowsy charm.** The bellman was a night watchman who went his round ringing a bell and crying the time, the

weather, and so on. Some idea of the *drowsy charm* may be had from Herrick's poem in the *Hesperides* (Grosart, ii. 28):

> "From noise of Scare-fires rest ye free,
> From Murders Benedicitie.
> From all mischances, that may fright
> Your pleasing slumbers in the night:
> Mercie secure ye all, and keep
> The Goblin from ye, while ye sleep.
> Past one aclock, and almost two,
> My Masters all, *Good day to you*."

9 84. **Nightly.** "During the night, not night by night" (Hales).

9 85. **Or let my lamp,** etc. Here Il Penseroso passes to the study of literature, — philosophy (88–96), tragedy (97–102), lyric poetry (103–108), and romance (109–120). Compare L'Allegro's reading. This passage has been a good deal admired, because the poet imagines some far-off observer catching sight of the light gleaming from Il Penseroso's tower.

9 87. **Outwatch the Bear.** "The Great Bear does not set below the horizon in northern latitudes, and only vanishes on account of the daylight" (Bell). Tennyson makes use of the same idea in his *Princess*, iv. 194–195:

> "I paced the terrace, till the Bear had wheel'd
> Thro' a great arc his seven slow suns."

9 88. **Thrice great Hermes.** Hermes Trismegistus (*i.e.*, thrice greatest) was the Egyptian Thoth, identified by the Greeks with their god Hermes or Mercury. He was regarded as the originator of Egyptian art, science, magic, alchemy, and religion, and the works attributed to him, but really written by the Neoplatonists of the fourth century of our era, were much studied. Read Longfellow's *Hermes Trismegistus*.

9–10 88–89. **Unsphere the spirit of Plato.** Draw down the spirit of Plato from the sphere in which it now dwells, or, to discard the figure, find out by intense study the doctrine embodied in Plato's works. The particular allusion is to the *Phædo* and those other portions of Plato's works where the doctrine of immortality is treated. See on 85; *cf. C.* 2–4.

10 90. **What worlds,** etc. "Are not *vast regions* included in *world?*" (Landor).

10 93. **And of those demons,** etc. Explain the zeugma. What must be understood after *And?* As Keightley has observed, Plato speaks of the intelligences which he calls *daimona*, but the assignment

to them of their abodes in the four elements over which they had power belongs to the later Platonists and to the writers of the middle ages.

10 95. **Consent.** "Sympathetic connexion" (Masson).

10 98. **Sceptred pall.** Either "royal robe" or "with sceptre and with pall" (Hales).

10 99–100. **Presenting Thebes,** etc. Milton here mentions the chief themes of Attic tragedy, having in mind particularly the dramas of Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. For *Thebes*, etc., see *Class. Dict.*, and for Æschylus, etc., consult some good history of Greek literature — Mahaffy's, if at hand. *Presenting*, representing; so frequently in Shakspere.

10 101–102. **Or what,** etc. In view of Milton's aversion to the romantic drama (see preface to *S. A.*), it may be that he has in mind here the tragedies of Ben Jonson, although it is to be hoped, as most editors think, that he includes those of Shakspere. For *buskined*, see on *L'Al.* 132.

10 104. **Musaeus.** A mythical poet of Thrace, and according to some legends the son of Orpheus. See *Class. Dict.* "It is always to the poets of a primitive age, the *bards*, that [Milton] compares himself — to Homer, Tiresias, and the Hebrew prophets. Orpheus and Musaeus are the poets he would best like to see before him in his pensive hours. Now in those primitive times the poet was almost an officer of the state; he was regarded with reverence, and classed with the priest or diviner. He sang in the halls of Grecian princes, and stirred up the warriors to emulate the great deeds of their fathers. In Palestine he assumed a still greater elevation, and, mixing the praises of virtue with exalted conceptions of God and of the national vocation, became what we call a prophet. This was the ideal of poetry which suited Milton." — Professor Seeley, *Macmillan's Magazine*, Vol. XIX. p. 410. See Pattison, *Milton*, pp. 183–184.

10 106. **Warbled to the string.** *Cf. Arcades* 87.

10 107. **Iron tears.** Explain.

10 109. **Him that left half-told.** Chaucer, who left *The Squire's Tale* unfinished. The characters and incidents mentioned in the following lines should be traced in the story itself and in Spenser's continuation of it (*F. Q.* iv. 2–3).

10 110. **Cambuscan.** Milton gives a wrong accentuation to this word.

10 113. **Virtuous.** "Powerful, efficacious by inherent qualities" (Schmidt). *Cf. C.* 165, 621. For the properties of the *ring*, see *The*

*Squire's Tale* (Skeat, *Student's Chaucer*) 146–155; for the *glass*, 132–141; for the *horse of brass*, 115–131; and for the *sword*, which Milton does not mention, 156–167.

11 116. **If aught else.** "Whatever else"; "a Latinism" (Bell). *Great bards;* Spenser, first of all, and then, perhaps, Boiardo, Ariosto, and Tasso.

11 120. **Where more is meant,** etc. That is, where there is an allegorical meaning, as in the *F. Q.* In Milton's time allegory was still highly prized, but now, although it is occasionally practised, as, for instance, in Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*, it is not so much thought of. The modern point of view is well expressed by Lowell, when he says that allegory "reverses the true office of poetry by making the real unreal. It is imagination endeavoring to recommend itself to the understanding by means of cuts." — *Works* (Houghton), Vol. III. p. 362. "The true type of the allegory is the Odyssey, which we read without suspicion as pure poem, and then find a new pleasure in divining its double meaning, as if we somehow got a better bargain of our author than he meant to give us." — *Ibid.*, Vol. IV. pp. 321–322. There is an allegory, by the way, in Milton's own *Comus*.

11 121. **Thus, Night,** etc. Landor thought this verse of ten syllables "should be reduced to the ranks." He also noted the rhymes in 119–122.

11 122. **Civil-suited.** In plain civilian dress; *cf. R. and J.* iii. 2. 10–11. One of the "epithets which designate dresses and decoration; of which epithets, it must be acknowledged, both Milton and Shakespeare are unreasonably fond" (Landor). Contrast *L'Al.* 59–62.

11 123. **Tricked.** Adorned; *cf. Lyc.* 170. *Frounced*, with hair curled and plaited.

11 124. **The Attic boy.** Cephalus, who was loved by Aurora, the goddess of dawn. See *Class. Dict.*

11 125. **Kerchieft.** Look up the original meaning of the word, and note how this was lost thought of when *handkerchief* was formed.

11 126. **Rocking.** "An active verb: the shrill winds rock the house" (Elton).

11 127. **Still.** Gentle.

11 128. **His.** Its; there is no personification here. At the time Milton wrote this poem, *its* was not yet well established. Shakspere used the word but ten times, and Milton only three times in his poetry and rarely in his prose. In Old English, or Anglo-Saxon, the personal pronouns were highly inflected, the following forms being used in the

declension of the singular number of the nominative and genitive cases of the third person:

| | Masc. | Neut. | Fem. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Nom. | hē (he) | hit | héo, híe, hí |
| Gen. | his | his | hiere, hire, hyre |

For a long time *his* was used for the genitive of both the masculine and neuter genders; *its* was afterwards formed from the nominative neuter by dropping the *h* and adding *s*, and served to relieve *his* of this double service. Throughout Milton's poems, therefore, the student should guard against finding personifications where none was intended by the poet.

11 130. **Minute-drops.** Explain.

11 134. **Brown.** Dusky, dark; see on *Lyc.* 2. *Sylvan*, Sylvanus, a Latin divinity of the fields and forests, whom later writers identified with Pan and other deities.

11 135. **Monumental oak.** Not because the monuments in churches were often formed of carved oak (Keightley), but because the oak is *monumental* in the sense of "memorial, old, telling of bygone years" (Masson). Browne compares Tennyson's *Talking Oak*. Chaucer, and Spenser after him, speaks of the "builder oak." Pattison asks "if any single word can be found equal to 'monumental' in its power of suggesting to the imagination the historic oak of park or chase, up to the knees in fern, which has outlasted ten generations of men; has been the mute witness of the scenes of love, treachery, or violence enacted in the baronial hall which it shadows and protects; and has been so associated with man that it is now rather a column and memorial obelisk than a tree of the forest?" — *Milton*, p. 24.

11 136. **Where the rude axe,** etc. Note the chiasmus.

11 140. **Profaner.** "Somewhat, or at all profane; = profan-*ish*, if there were such a word" (Hales).

11 141. **Day's garish eye.** The sun; look up etymology and meaning of *garish*. *Cf. C.* 978, *Lyc.* 26, *F. Q.* i. 3. 4: "the great eye of heaven," and *R. and J.* iii. 2. 25.

11 142. **Honeyed thigh.** What does the bee actually carry on its thigh? But *cf. Lyc.* 140.

11 145. **Consort.** Companionship, or, perhaps, concert.

11 146. **Dewy-feathered Sleep.** Why the epithet? *Cf. P. L.* iv. 614.

11 147–150. **And let some strange,** etc. Of all the interpretations of this difficult passage, Masson's seems the most reasonable: "'Let some strange mysterious dream wave (*i.e.* move to and fro) at his (*i.e.* Sleep's) wings, in airy stream,' etc. *Wave* is a neuter verb here, as in *Par. Lost*, xii. 593." *Lively*, vivid.

12 151. **Breathe.** What part of the verb?

12 153. **To mortals good.** Good to mortals; *cf. Lyc.* 184.

12 154. **Genius of the wood.** In *Arcades*, the *Genius of the wood* appears, and makes a long speech, in the course of which he explains his duties.

12 155–166. **But let my due feet,** etc. "Following his usual practice Milton has combined into a single picture suggestions drawn from several sources. . . . Thus by selection he paints an aspect of the ideal life of the student, whether it be passed at the University or in the close of a cathedral. The lines show that in 1633 (or 1634) Milton was still in sympathy with the ritual of the Church, though he did not care to enter its ranks as a clergyman. But from the prose works written later on might be quoted passages that condemn, directly or indirectly, almost everything which he here approves" (Verity).

12 155. **Due feet.** Explain; *cf. C.* 12.

12 156. **Cloister's pale.** Enclosure of the cloister; *cloister's* being Warton's emendation for *cloisters*. Landor, however, preferred to keep the old reading, and to take *pale* as an adjective, an interpretation that can certainly be defended. The word order would then be one frequently used by Milton, and the obvious tautology in *cloister's pale* would be avoided. The latter, though, is got rid of in another way, by supposing that Milton had in mind a particular cloister, probably Cambridge. "Observe: only at this point of the poem is Penseroso in contact with his fellow-creatures. Throughout the rest he is solitary" (Masson).

12 157. **And love.** And *let me* love; strictly the subject of the verb is what? *Embowèd*, arched.

12 158. **Massy-proof.** "Proof against the mass they have to support" (Masson). But the first and second editions have *massy proof*, which Bell interprets as "proof against the great weight of the stone roof, because they are massive"; Verity also prints *massy proof*, and suggests that "*proof* may be a noun (in apposition to *pillars*), with the general sense 'solidity.'" No wonder Landor thought the word "an inelegant one, and, if a compound, compounded badly. It seems more applicable to castles, whose *massiveness* gave *proof* of resistance."

12 159. **Storied windows.** Windows of stained glass on which are pictured scenes from the Bible; *cf. C.* 516. *Dight;* see on *L'Al.* 62.

12 160. **Casting a dim,** etc. "I question whether Milton ever saw any but the dingy pictures in the dusty windows of English cathedrals, imperfectly shown by the gray English daylight. He would else have illuminated that word 'dim' with some epithet that should not chase away the dimness, yet should make it glow like a million of rubies, sapphires, emeralds, and topazes."—Hawthorne, *Works* (Houghton), Vol. VI. p. 351. *Cf. ibid.*, Vol. X. p. 278. At the time *Il P.* was written, Milton had not visited Italy. See Verity's apposite quotation from More, *Utopia.*

12 161. **The pealing organ.** The favorite instrument of Milton, and on which his father, a noted musician in his time, taught him to play; *cf. P. L.* i. 708–709, xi. 558–563, *Nat.* 130. In the latter part of his *Tract on Education* (1644), he recommends that the time of students after exercise, and before and even after meat, be taken up "in recreating and composing their travailed spirits with the solemn and divine harmonies of music heard or learned, either whilst the skilful organist plies his grave and fancied descant in lofty fugues, or the whole symphony with artful and unimaginable touches adorn and grace the well-studied chords of some choice composer; sometimes the lute or soft organ-stop, waiting on elegant voices either to religious, martial, or civil ditties, which, if wise men and prophets be not extremely out, have a great power over dispositions and manners to smooth and make them gentle from rustic harshness and distempered passions."—Morley, *English Prose Writings of Milton*, p. 306.

12 164. **As may.** *Such* as may; *cf. Nat.* 98. For the thought, see *Vacation Exercise* 33–35.

12 170. **Spell.** Note the meaning.

12 171. **Shew.** For pronunciation, *cf. C.* 994–997.

12 175–176. **These pleasures,** etc. Contrast *L'Al.* 151–152.

## COMUS.

In order to appreciate *Comus*, it is necessary to know something of the circumstances under which the masque was produced. In the summer of 1631, the Earl of Bridgewater was made President of the Council of Wales and Lord Lieutenant of North and South Wales and of the counties on the Welsh border, although he did not go to Wales, it would seem, until the spring of 1633. In the fall of 1634 he was inaugurated with splendid ceremonies, and it was for this inauguration that *Comus* was written. The masque was performed at Ludlow Castle on Michaelmas night, Sept. 29, 1634, before the Earl of Bridgewater and his invited guests. Three of the parts were taken by the Earl's children, Lady Alice Edgerton taking the part of The Lady, and Viscount Brackley and Mr. Thomas Edgerton, the parts of The First and Second Brothers. The Attendant Spirit, afterward Thyrsis, was played by Lawes, who wrote the music for the occasion. Who took the parts of Comus and Sabrina, we do not know, although a good actor was needed for the former and a good singer for the latter.

It is supposed that Milton wrote *Comus* early in 1634, so as to have it ready for the performance in the fall of that year. Three editions of the masque appeared in the poet's lifetime. The first of these was issued in 1637 by Lawes, and was published without Milton's name, although the motto on the title page —

*Eheu quid volui misero mihi! floribus Austrum*
*Perditus*[1] —

shows that his consent to the publication had been obtained. Milton himself published the poem in 1645 and 1673. In addition to this, there are two MS. copies, — one called the *Bridgewater MS.*, and the other, in Milton's own hand, called the *Cambridge MS.*

In the anonymous edition of 1637, there appeared the following dedication, which was reprinted in the edition of 1645, but omitted in that of 1673:

"*To the Right Honourable John, Lord Brackley, son and heir-apparent to the Earl of Bridgewater, etc.*"

"My Lord,

"This Poem, which received its first occasion of birth from yourself and others of your noble family, and much honour from your own person in the performance, now returns again to make a final dedication of itself to you.

[1] Virgil, *Ecl.* ii. 58–59.

Although not openly acknowledged by the Author, yet it is a legitimate offspring, so lovely and so much desired that the often copying of it hath tired my pen to give my several friends satisfaction, and brought me to a necessity of producing it to the public view, and now to offer it up, in all rightful devotion, to those fair hopes and rare endowments of your much-promising youth, which give a full assurance to all that know you of a future excellence. Live, sweet Lord, to be the honour of your name; and receive this as your own from the hands of him who hath by many favours been long obliged to your most honoured Parents, and, as in this representation your attendant *Thyrsis*, so now in all real expression

"Your faithful and most humble Servant,

"H. LAWES."

In the edition of 1645, but omitted from that of 1673, appeared "*The Copy of a Letter written by Sir Henry Wotton to the Author upon the following Poem*," the first two paragraphs of which are as follows:

"From the College, this 13 of April, 1638.

"SIR,

"It was a special favour when you lately bestowed upon me here the first taste of your acquaintance, though no longer than to make me know that I wanted more time to value it and to enjoy it rightly; and, in truth, if I could then have imagined your farther stay in these parts, which I understood afterwards by Mr. H., I would have been bold, in our vulgar phrase, to mend my draught (for you left me with an extreme thirst), and to have begged your conversation again, jointly with your said learned friend, over a poor meal or two, that we might have banded together some good Authors of the ancient time; among which I observed you to have been familiar.

"Since your going, you have charged me with new obligations, both for a very kind letter from you dated the 6th of this month, and for a dainty piece of entertainment which came therewith. Wherein I should much commend the tragical part, if the lyrical did not ravish me with a certain Doric delicacy in your Songs and Odes, whereunto I must plainly confess to have seen yet nothing parallel in our language: *Ipsa mollities*. But I must not omit to tell you that I now only owe you thanks for intimating unto me (how modestly soever) the true artificer. For the work itself I had viewed some good while before with singular delight; having received it from our common friend Mr. R., in the very close of the late R.'s Poems, printed at Oxford; whereunto it was added (as I now suppose) that the accessory might help out the principal, according to the art of Stationers, and to leave the reader *con la bocca dolce*."

For the plot of *Comus*, Milton seems to have drawn upon several sources, besides those mentioned in the notes. There is a tradition that Alice Edgerton and her two young brothers actually got lost at

night in Haywood Forest near Ludlow, that the sister became separated from the brothers, and that Milton based his masque upon this incident. But such a story might very easily have originated after the performance of Milton's *Comus*. On the other hand, it seems that Milton was indebted for some hints regarding the character of Comus to Ben Jonson's masque of *Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue* and to a Latin play called *Comus, sive Phagesiposia Cimmeria: Somnium*, by a Dutchman, Erycius Puteanus, whose real name was Hendrik van der Putten; and for the plot itself to George Peele's comedy of *The Old Wives' Tale*.

For the study of the English masque in general, see Ward, *History of English Dramatic Literature* (last edition), Symonds, *Shakspere's Predecessors in the English Drama*, Verity, *Milton's Arcades and Comus*, Sörgel, *Die Englische Maskenspiele*, etc.

14 2. **Mansion.** Abiding-place; *cf. Il P.* 92, *John* xiv. 2.

14 3. **Insphered.** See on *Il P.* 88–89.

14 4. **Serene.** Accented on the first syllable. A general rule of Shakspere's, and often of Milton's meter, is that "dissyllabic oxytonical adjectives and participles become paroxytonical before nouns accented on the first syllable" (Schmidt, p. 1413). See ll. 11, 37, 217, 273, etc. In the case of *serene*, however, Masson thinks he detects "a finer effect in the metrical liberty involved in the ordinary pronunciation."

14 5. **Dim spot.** Why *dim?*

14 6. **And, with.** And *where they*, with; see ll. 26, 198.

14 7. **Pestered.** Clogged, encumbered; for the probable etymology of the word, see Skeat, *Etym. Dict. Pinfold*, "an enclosure for animals; especially, a cattle-pound" (*Stand. Dict.*).

14 9. **The Crown that Virtue gives.** *Cf. Rev.* iv. 4.

14 10. **After this mortal change.** After the change that comes to all mortals, *i.e.*, death; Bell quotes *Job* xiv. 14. But Masson thinks it means "this mortal state of life," "this variation of our condition," or, as Rolfe puts it, "After the changes of this mortal life, or this mortal life of change"; Browne, on the other hand, says that *change* "here has its old meaning of a figure in a dance." *Cf.* Shelley, *Adonais* 71–72:

> "till darkness and the law
> Of change shall o'er his sleep the mortal curtain draw."

14 11. **Enthroned.** Two syllables, with the first accented; *cf. Rev.* iv. 4.

14 12. **Be.** Indicative here.

14 13. **Golden key.** *Cf. Lyc.* 110–111, *Matt.* xvi. 19.

14 16. **Ambrosial weeds.** Heavenly garments; *cf.* 83. For *weeds*, see on *L'Al.* 120; also *C.* 189, 390.

14 19. **Every . . . each.** *Every . . . every*, or *each . . . each* are more usual; but *cf. C.* 311, *Lyc.* 93.

14 20. **Took in by lot, 'twixt high and nether Jove.** The allusion is to the division of rule among Saturn's three sons, Pluto, Neptune, and Jupiter. In the *Iliad*, xv. 190 *et seq.*, Neptune says to Iris: "For three brethren are we, and sons of Kronos, whom Rhea bare, Zeus, and myself, and Hades is the third, the ruler of the folk in the under-world. And in three lots are all things divided, and each drew a domain of his own, and to me fell the hoary sea, to be my habitation for ever, when we shook the lots: and Hades drew the murky darkness, and Zeus the wide heaven, in clear air and clouds, but the earth and high Olympus are yet common to all" (Lang, Leaf, and Myers). *High and nether Jove* (the designation is not original with Milton) are of course Jupiter and Pluto. On the punctuation of the line, see Masson.

14 22. **Like to rich and various gems.** "A noticeable fact about the similes [in Milton's poetry] involving nature is the frequency with which the nature element appears on the wrong side of the comparison; that is, instead of using a natural object to explain or illustrate something artificial or human, these elements are inverted. . . . The fact that the artificial object is thus employed doubtless indicates that, in the writer's opinion, it was more familiar or more beautiful than the natural object which it is supposed to explain or heighten." — V. P. Squires, *Mod. Lang. Notes*, Vol. IX. p. 234.

14 23. **Unadornèd.** "How can a bosom be *unadorned* which already is *inlaid* with gems?" (Landor).

15 24. **His tributary gods.** Explain.

15 25. **Several.** Separate.

15 27. **This Isle.** Great Britain; by all means read Shakspere's description of "this scepter'd isle" in *Rich. II.* ii. 1. 40 *et seq.*

15 29. **Quarters.** Divides into four parts; there were then four separate governments in Great Britain, which were located at London and Edinburgh, and in Wales and the northern counties of England (Keightley). This interpretation seems to be supported by *this tract* (30). *Blue-haired deities;* the English people, because, as Masson suggests, there is "a recollection of 'blue' as the British colour, inherited from the old times of the blue-stained Britons who fought with Cæsar." On the other hand, *quarters to* may be taken in the general sense of "divides among," and *blue-haired deities* may be nothing but a

variation of *tributary gods* (24) or possibly a special section of them. The epithet *blue-haired* might then be justified because "Ovid expressly calls the sea-deities *caerulei dii*, and Neptune *caeruleus deus*, thus associating blue with the sea" (Bell), and because "from the stage-directions in other Masques it may be inferred that convention associated hair of this hue with the deities of the sea" (Verity). Against this interpretation, however, it may be urged that "green-haired" "is the usual poetic epithet for Neptune and his subordinates" (Masson), and that *blue-haired deities* "must be distinct from the tributary gods who wield their little tridents (line 27), otherwise the thought would ill accord with the complimentary nature of lines 30–36" (Bell).

15 30. **This tract.** Wales.

15 31. **A noble peer.** The Earl of Bridgewater, Viceroy of Wales, who was present at the performance. This is but one of the many compliments which the poet contrives to pay throughout the poem, which the student may search out for himself.

15 33. **An old and haughty nation,** etc. A tribute justified by the history of the Welsh people.

15 36. **New-intrusted.** The Earl, however, had received his appointment as early as the summer of 1631.

15 37. **Perplexed.** Entangled; see on 4.

15 38. **The nodding horror,** etc. Think out and explain the figure.

15 41. **Quick command.** Explain.

15 45. **In hall and bower.** The *bower* was "An inner apartment, *esp.* as distinguished from the 'hall,' or large public room, in ancient mansions" (*New Eng. Dict.*). Scott uses the phrase as the equivalent of "among men or women," since the *hall* of the lord was often distinguished from the *bower* of the lady.

15 46. **Bacchus.** See *Class. Dict.*; Trent refers to Walter Pater's *Greek Studies.*

15 48. **After the Tuscan mariners transformed.** After the Tuscan mariners had been transformed. The construction is a Latin one; *cf. P. L.* i. 573, v. 248, etc., Cicero, *Phil.* iii. 9: *iam a condita urbe*, "even from the founding of the city." The story of the mariners who seized Bacchus, and were by him changed into dolphins, is told in the Homeric *Hymn to Dionysos* and Ovid's *Met.* iii. 660 *et seq.*; but see *Class. Dict.*

15 49. **As the winds listed.** *Cf. John* iii. 8.

15 50. **Circe's island.** Ææa, off the coast of Latium. For the story of Ulysses's visit to Circe, see *Odyssey* x. *On . . . fell; cf.* the Latin phrase, *incidere in.* Note the anadiplosis in this line.

15 51. **Daughter of the Sun.** Browne, in his *Inner Temple Masque*, had called Circe "daughter to the Sun." *Charmèd cup* illustrates what figure?

16 58. **Comus.** This genealogy, as well as the idea of bringing Bacchus to Circe's island, is Milton's own invention. *Comus* (Greek κῶμος) means a "revel," "carousal," "merrymaking." If the first genealogy given to Mirth in *L'Al.* 14–24 be accepted, Comus is the half-brother of Mirth, she representing Pleasure on the innocent side, and he on the sensual side.

16 59. **Frolic.** See on *L'Al.* 13. *Of*, because of.

16 60. **Celtic and Iberian fields.** France and Spain. Why appropriate for Comus?

16 61. **Ominous.** A dissyllable here; *cf.* 205–209.

16 65. **Orient.** Bright; *cf. P. L.* i. 545–546. Trent, however, thinks Milton may have intended "a partial reference to the *eastern* drugs and poisons familiar in literature."

16 66. **Drouth of Phœbus.** Drought of Phœbus, *i.e.*, thirst caused by the heat of the sun.

16 67. **Fond.** Foolish; see on *Il P.* 6.

16 69. **The express resemblance of the gods.** *Cf. Genesis* i. 26–27.

16 72. **All other parts,** etc. This is a deviation from the account given by Homer. *Cf.* the *Odyssey* x. 237–240: "Now when she had given them the cup and they had drunk it off, presently she smote them with a wand, and in the styes of the swine she penned them. So they had the head and voice, the bristles and the shape of swine, but their mind abode even as of old" (Butcher and Lang). Why did Milton make the change?

16 74. **Not once perceive,** etc. Another deviation; see on 72. Why this change? Whose idea gives the greater pathos, Milton's or Homer's? *Cf. Odyssey* ix. 91–97: "Then straightway they went and mixed with the men of the lotus-eaters, and so it was that the lotus-eaters devised not death for our fellows, but gave them of the lotus to taste. Now whosoever of them did eat the honey-sweet fruit of the lotus, had no more wish to bring tidings nor to come back, but there he chose to abide with the lotus-eating men, ever feeding on the lotus, and forgetful of his homeward way" (Butcher and Lang). Masson cites Plato's ethical application of the story in the *Republic* viii. and Browne compares *F. Q.* ii. 12. 86, and note, in Clarendon Press edition.

16 79. **Adventurous glade.** Explain.

16 80. **Swift as the sparkle,** etc. Note how sound and sense are blended; *cf. P. L.* i. 745, iv. 556, *V. and A.* 815.

16 83. **Spun out of Iris' woof.** Spun out of the material dyed by Iris, the goddess of the rainbow; an explanation supported by *P. L.* xi. 244. *Cf.* 16, 992.

16 84. **Weeds.** See on 16.

17 86. **Who, with,** etc. Note the alliteration in this and the two following lines.

17 87. **Knows to still.** *Cf. Lyc.* 10–11.

17 88. **Nor of less faith.** "Not less trustworthy than he is skilled in music" (Masson).

17 92. **Viewless.** Invisible.

17 93. **The star.** The evening star. Milton may have remembered Shakspere's description of the morning star; *cf. M. for M.* iv. 2. 218 (quoted by Keightley).

17 96. **His glowing axle,** etc. "Perhaps the text is an allusion to the opinion of the ancients, that the setting of the sun in the Atlantic ocean was accompanied with a noise, as of the sea hissing. See Juvenal, *Sat.* xiv. 280: *Audiet Herculeo stridentem gurgite solem*" (Todd).

17 97. **Steep.** Milton here refers to what Tennyson calls "the slope of the sea," which is, of course, an optical illusion. *Cf. The Princess* vii. 20–26. The word does not, therefore, mean "deep" (Browne); nor does it refer either to the steep descent of the sun (Keightley) or to the "one wide road of light, which seems to rise *steep* from the spectator to the disappearing sun" (Elton).

17 98. **Slope.** Sloped, *i.e.*, sunk beneath the horizon, as the context shows.

17 99. **Dusky pole.** "The zenith, top of heaven (l. 94), which darkens as the sun withdraws, save for a last shaft of light (*upward beam*)" (Elton).

17 101. **His chamber.** *Cf. Psalm* xix. 4–5.

17 102–144. **Meanwhile,** etc. Bell contrasts the "spirit" of these lines with that of *L'Al.* 25–40.

17 105. **Rosy twine.** Twined roses.

18 111. **Of purer fire.** Of the four elements, out of which it was anciently supposed everything was created, fire, the element of which it was thought the gods consisted, was deemed the purest. *Cf. A. and C.* v. 2. 292–293, *Hen. V.* iii. 7. 21–25. "The stress is on *fire*" (Browne).

18 112. **The starry quire.** This is one of the numberless references in English poetry to the music of the spheres. *Cf. M. of V.* v. 1. 60–65, *Arcades* 61–73. For the construction of the phrase, *cf.* 105, 1021, etc. Note the rhythm in 113–114.

18 115. **Sounds and seas.** Distinguish.

18 116. **Morrice.** A *Moorish* dance, said to have been brought from Spain into England in the reign of Edward III. What is the force of *to?*

18 118. **Pert.** Lively, alert; as in *M. N. D.* i. 1. 13. *Dapper*, spruce, dainty; originally it meant "brave." Is there any real distinction between *fairies* and *elves?*

18 119. **Dimpled brook.** "Note the exquisite choice of epithets in *dimpled* and *trim* (l. 120)" (Trent).

18 121. **Wakes.** Night-watches. "The wake was kept by an all-night watch in the church. Tents were erected in the church-yard to supply refreshments to the crowd on the following day, which was kept as a holiday. Through the large attendance from neighboring parishes at wakes, devotion and reverence gradually diminished, until they ultimately became mere fairs or markets, characterized by merry-making and often disgraced by indulgence and riot" (*Cent. Dict.*). See Brand, *Popular Antiquities.*

18 125. **Rites.** *Rights* in both Milton's editions, though *rites* in l. 535 (Masson).

18 129. **Colytto.** "A goddess worshiped by the Thracians, and apparently identical with the Phrygian Cybelé. Her worship was introduced at Athens and Corinth, where it was celebrated, in private, with great indecency and licentiousness." — Harper's *Dict. of Class. Lit. and Ant.*

18 132. **Stygian darkness.** See on *L'Al.* 3. *Spets;* spits.

18 135. **Hecat'.** Hecate, "a mysterious divinity sometimes identified with Diana and sometimes with Proserpina. As Diana represents the moonlight splendor of night, so Hecate represents its darkness and terrors. She haunted cross-roads and graveyards, was the goddess of sorcery and witchcraft, and wandered by night, seen only by the dogs, whose barking told of her approach" (Gayley).

18 138–140. **Ere the,** etc. "These lines are a little mosaic of borrowed touches" (Verity). See Introduction, p. xlii *et seq.*

18 139. **Nice.** Coy, prudish; as often in Shakspere.

18 141. **Descry.** Reveal.

19 144. **Light fantastic round.** *Cf. L'Al.* 34. *Round;* dance. *The Measure* is described in the *Cambridge MS.* of *Comus* as "in a wild, rude and wanton Antic" (quoted by Verity), although it was usually a grave and solemn dance. See *Much Ado* ii. 1. 80.

19 145. **Break off,** etc. Observe how well the change in meter

corresponds with the change that comes over the spirit of Comus and his talk.

19 147. **Shrouds.** Shelters, coverts; the verb is used in 316. "The *Cambridge MS.* adds the direction *They all scatter*" (Verity).

19 151. **Trains.** Allurements; as in *Macb.* iv. 3. 118.

19 153–154. **Thus I hurl,** etc. "Conceive that at this moment of the performance the actor who personates Comus flings into the air, or makes a gesture as if flinging into the air, some powder, which, by a stage-device, is kindled, so as to produce a flash of blue light" (Masson). The *Cambridge MS.* has *powdered spells; cf.* l. 165. *Spongy*, because the air seems to absorb the spells.

19 156. **Presentments.** Representations, pictures; as in *Ham.* iii. 4. 54. *False*, because imaginary.

19 157. **Quaint.** "Bizarre and pretty, like the dress (*habits*) of a conjuror" (Elton); in Shakspere the word means "fine, neat, pretty, pleasant" (Schmidt).

19 161. **Glozing.** Flattering, deceiving.

19 163. **Wind me into.** Insinuate myself into the confidence of, as in *Lear* i. 2. 106.

19 165. **Virtue.** Power, efficacy; see on *Il P.* 113. *This magic dust;* see on 153–154.

19 166–169. **I shall appear,** etc. On the text of these lines, see Masson.

19 167. **Gear.** Business.

19 168. **Fairly.** Softly; in *Much Ado* v. 4. 72, "Soft and fair" together signify "gently."

20 169. **The Lady.** "She is the sweet embodiment of Milton's youthful ideal of virtue," says Van Dyke, "clothed with the fairness of opening womanhood, armed with the sun-clad power of chastity. Darkness and danger cannot

Stir the constant mood of her calm thoughts.

Evil things have no power upon her, but shrink abashed from her presence." After comparing with her Tennyson's Isabel and Godiva, he adds: "These are sisters, perfect in purity as in beauty, and worthy to be enshrined forever in the love of youth. They are ideals which draw the heart, not downward, but upward by the power of '*das ewig Weibliche.*'" — Van Dyke, *Poetry of Tennyson* (second edition), pp. 69–70.

20 171. **Methought.** It seemed to me. In Anglo-Saxon there

were two verbs, ðencan, *to think*, and ðyncan, *to seem*. From the latter came *methinks*, the verb being intransitive and the pronoun dative.

20 173. **Jocund.** *Cf. L'Al.* 94.

20 175. **Granges.** Granaries; the original meaning of the word.

20 176. **Pan.** The Greek god of flocks and shepherds. See *Class. Dict.*

20 178. **Swilled.** Drunken; *swilled*, from *swill*, to drink greedily, is an epithet transferred from wassailers. "Where did the young lady ever hear or learn such expressions as 'swilled insolence'?" (Landor). *Cf. P. L.* i. 501–502.

20 179. **Wassailers.** Revelers; look up etymology of word.

20 184. **Spreading favour of these pines.** Explain.

20 188. **Grey-hooded Even.** Is this as good an example of personification as the one in *R. and J.* iii. 5. 9–10, or the one in *Ham.* i. 1. 166–167? Landor found fault with the figure. Can you guess why?

20 189. **Sad.** Grave, serious; as often in Elizabethan English. *Votarist;* votary, one who has taken a vow. A palmer was originally "one who made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land and brought home a *palm*-branch as a token." — Skeat, *Works of Chaucer*, Vol. V. p. 3, which see for the essential difference between palmers and pilgrims. Can you realize the picture in 188–190? Do you know how a palmer was dressed?

20 190. **Wain.** Wagon.

20 195. **Stole.** *Cf. Il P.* 91; see Abbott, § 343.

20 195–200. **Else, O thievish Night,** etc. Do you regard this figure as very poetic?

21 204. **Single.** Mere, unmixed; *cf.* 369.

21 205–209. **A thousand fantasies,** etc. "These lines are supposed by Warton and Todd to be based upon passages in Marco Polo's Travels, and in Heywood's Hierarchy of Angels. In a quotation from the latter work, benighted travellers are related to have seen three strange human shapes, that called and beckoned to them. But the Tempest may well have suggested the whole imagery" (Browne). Verity, however, urges that "Milton was drawing upon a popular superstition; . . . No doubt many of his audience believed in these 'calling shapes' and 'airy tongues' of which mediæval romance is full." On ll. 205–225, see Henry Reed, *Lectures on the British Poets*, i. 213–214.

21 208. **Airy tongues.** ". . . if there is one thing more striking

than another in this poet, it is that his great and original imagination was almost wholly nourished by books, perhaps I should rather say set in motion by them. It is wonderful how, from the most withered and juiceless hint gathered from his reading, his grand images rise like an exhalation; how from the most battered old lamp caught in that huge drag-net with which he swept the waters of learning, he could conjure a tall genius to build his palaces. Whatever he touches swells and towers. That wonderful passage in 'Comus' of the airy tongues, perhaps the most imaginative in suggestion he ever wrote, was conjured out of a dry sentence in Purchas's abstract of Marco Polo." — Lowell, *Works* (Houghton), Vol. IV. pp. 104–105. But see on 205–209. Beers, in his *Hist. of Eng. Rom.*, etc., pp. 93–94, quotes ll. 208–209 as a glimpse "behind the curtain which hangs between nature and the supernatural." *Syllable*, pronounce distinctly; literally, pronounce the syllables one by one.

21 212. **Conscience.** A trisyllable.

21 215. **Chastity.** Instead of *Charity* (Keightley); *cf. I Corinthians* xiii. 13. Verity notes that "the substantive *chastity* occurs seven times in the poem; the adjective *chaste* four times." Why is this significant?

21 216. **I see ye visibly.** *Cf.* 155–156.

21 217. **Supreme.** See on 4; *to whom* should be slurred into one syllable (*t'whom*).

21 219. **Glistering.** Glistening, a form not used by either Shakspere or Milton. *Cf.* the familiar line in *M. of V.* ii. 7. 65.

21 221–224. **Was I deceived,** etc. For other examples of iteration of the same sort, see Hill, *Principles of Rhetoric* (1895), p. 152; perhaps the finest example in Milton's poems is in *P. L.* vii. 25–26. But, if possible, consult C. A. Smith, *Repetition and Parallelism in English Verse.* What proverb do these lines suggest?

21 225. **Casts.** This is an example of construction changed by change of thought; we should expect *cast.* But see Abbott, § 415, Masson, Vol. III. p. 84. *Tufted; cf. L'Al.* 78.

22 230. **Sweet Echo.** For the story of Echo and Narcissus (237), see *Class. Dict.* The appeal to Echo seems to have been a common device with masque-writers, and several instances very similar to the present one can be pointed out in masques which preceded Milton's. Examine the metrical structure of the song.

22 231. **Thy airy shell.** The hollow vault of the atmosphere, or Omar Khayyám's

"inverted Bowl they call the Sky,
Whereunder crawling coop'd we live and die."

*Cf. Nat.* 102–103. But the word has been taken as referring to (1) a sea-shell, (2) a musical shell (*concha*), or (3) the body or form of Echo. Thomas, who defends the last interpretation, says: "Milton frequently uses 'airy' in the sense of 'unsubstantial' or 'spirit.' (See above, l. 208; also *Il P.* 148); and if we remember the mythological story, how Echo pined away, and her material body disappeared, leaving nothing but her voice, 'airy shell' might well be applied to her form." Of which of these, prithee, was Landor thinking, when he said: "The habitation is better adapted to an oyster than to Echo"?

22 232. **Meander.** A river in Asia Minor from which we have derived a much-used word. See Hales, *Folia Litteraria*, pp. 231–238. Professor Hales thinks the Meander is mentioned because it "was a famous haunt of swans, and the swan was a favourite bird with the Greek and Latin writers — one to whose sweet singing they perpetually allude. . . . there is no particular reference to the sinuous course of the river, except so far as the epithet 'slow' refers to it." The special haunt of the nightingale which Milton had in mind, according to Hales, was "the woodlands close by Athens to the north-west, through which the Cephissus flowed, and where stood the birthplace of Sophocles,

Singer of sweet Colonus and its child."

*Margent*, margin.

22 234. **Love-lorn.** Deprived of her love; *cf. Temp.* iv. 1. 68.

22 241. **Parley.** Speech. Do you note the appropriateness of this designation? *Daughter of the Sphere*, *i.e.*, daughter of what Milton calls the *airy shell*, if that phrase be taken in the sense first suggested in the note on 231; see *Cent. Dict. s. v. sphere.* Warburton (quoted by Todd), however, thinks that Milton supposes Echo to "owe her first existence to the reverberation of the music of the spheres." If this be true, *sphere* is used in the sense common to the old astronomers, who imagined that the stars, sun, moon, and planets were set in transparent spheres, which revolved about the earth as their center and produced the "music of the spheres." *Cf. At a Solemn Music* 2.

22 243. **Resounding grace.** Grace of resounding, *i.e.*, charm of echo. What is the effect of the Alexandrine?

22 244. In the *Cambridge MS.*, Verity says, there is a stage-direction: *Comus looks in and speaks.* "This beginning has the ring of Marlowe's verse, its impetus and passion" (Elton).

22 247. **Vocal air.** Explain.

22 248. **His.** Its.

22 250. **Empty-vaulted night.** Explain.

22 251. **Fall.** *Cf. T. N.* i. 1. 4. *Smoothing*, etc.; *cf. Il P.* 58.

22 252. **It.** What? Note the exquisite beauty of ll. 249–252.

22 253. **Sirens.** Milton, in associating the sirens with Circe, modifies the myth to suit his own purpose, just as Browne in his *Inner Temple Masque* had previously done. Homer, moreover, mentions only two Sirens. See *Class. Dict.*; *Odyssey* x. xii. Also see on 867–889.

22 254. **Flowery-kirtled.** Wearing kirtles covered with flowers, or, perhaps, kirtles made of flowers.

22 256. **Take the prisoned soul.** "Take the soul prisoner; 'prisoned' being used proleptically" (Bell). For examples of prolepsis in Shakspere, see Schmidt, p. 1420.

22 257. **Lap.** *Cf. L'Al.* 136. *Scylla;* see *Class. Dict.*

23 258. **Barking waves.** *Cf.* Virgil, *Æneid* vii. 588: *multis circum latrantibus undis.*

23 259. **Charybdis.** See *Class. Dict.*

23 260. **Yet they,** etc. Browne quotes *F. Q.* iii. Introduction 4: "My senses lulled are in slomber of delight."

23 265. **Hail, foreign wonder!** *Cf. Temp.* i. 2. 421–427. Dr. Johnson thought the dispute between the Lady and Comus "the most animated and affecting scene of the drama."

23 267. **Unless.** To bring out the meaning, supply *thou be* after *Unless*, although the charm of the line lies in the suppressed inference.

23 268. **Pan.** See on 176. *Sylvan;* see on *Il P.* 134.

23 269–270. **Forbidding,** etc. *Cf. Arcades* 44–53.

23 271. **Ill is lost.** A Latin idiom, —*male perditur* (Keightley).

23 273. **Extreme shift.** Last resort; *cf.* 617. For accent, see on 4.

23–24 277–290. **What chance,** etc. "Here is an imitation of those scenes in the Greek tragedies where the dialogue proceeds by question and answer, a single verse being allotted to each" (Hurd, quoted by Masson). *Cf. Rich. III.* iv. 4, 211–218, 343–361, *M. of V.* iv. 1. 65–69, Browning, *Balaustion*, etc.

23 279. **Near-ushering guides.** Explain.

23 285. **Forestalling.** Anticipating.

24 286. **Hit.** Guess; see on *Il P.* 14.

24 290. **Hebe.** See on *L'Al.* 29. *Unrazored;* Warton thought this an "unpleasant epithet," but he noted that Shakspere has *razorable*,

*Temp.* ii. 1. 250. Does Milton make the brothers talk in character with his description of them?

24 291. **What time.** When. *Laboured ox;* why the epithet? The notation of time here is quite pastoral. "The return of oxen and horses from the plough is certainly not a natural circumstance of an English evening, except it be an evening in winter, when the ploughman must work as long as he can see" (Todd). Landor also says that "in the summer, and this was summer, neither the ox nor the hedger are at work."

24 293. **Swinked.** Labored, tired; look up etymology. *Hedger*, a maker or mender of hedges; possibly the word is here used generally for "laborer."

24 294. **Mantling.** Covering like a mantle; not "spreading," as some editors interpret. Ll. 294–296 are among the best in the poem.

24 297. **Port.** Bearing. *As they stood;* pleonasm.

24 299. **Element.** The air or sky; so in Shakspere frequently.

24 301. **Plighted.** Folded. For *awe-strook*, see Masson on *P. L.* ii. 165.

24 303. **Like the path to Heaven.** Point out the similarity.

24 312. **Dingle . . . dell.** Distinguish.

24 313. **Bosky.** Woody. *Bourne*, brook or boundary, it is difficult to say which. See *New Eng. Dict.*

24 315. **Stray attendance.** Strayed attendants; for examples in Shakspere of the abstract for the concrete, see Schmidt, pp. 1421–1423.

25 316. **Shroud.** See on 147.

25 317. **Low-roosted lark.** "The lark in her low resting-place" (Masson); *roost*, even to-day, is used figuratively for "any temporary resting-place" (*Stand. Dict.*). *Cf. P. R.* ii. 279–280.

25 318. **Thatched pallet.** *Thatched*, as Masson suggests, may here refer to the texture of the nest itself, and not to the covering. Keightley, however, says: "The ideas here belong rather to a hen-house than to the resting-place of the lark, which has no *thatch* over it, and in which, as it is on the ground, he does not *roost*."

25 322. **Courtesy.** Milton suggests the correct derivation of the word; *cf. F. Q.* vi. 1. 1:

> "Of Court, it seemes, men Courtesie doe call,
> For that it there most useth to abound;
> And well beseemeth that in princes hall
> That vertue should be plentifully found,
> Which of all goodly manners is the ground,
> And roote of civill conversation:"

25 324. **Tapestry.** Pronounce.

25 329. **Square.** Adjust; *cf. W. T.* v. 1. 52.

25 330. **The Two Brothers.** "The dialogue between the two Brothers is an amicable contest between fact and philosophy. The younger draws his arguments from common apprehension, and the obvious appearance of things: the elder proceeds on a profounder knowledge, and argues from abstracted principles. Here the difference of their ages is properly made subservient to a contrast of character" (Warton, quoted by Todd). Considered from a dramatic point of view, could the dialogue be improved in any way?

25 332. **The traveller's benison.** *Cf. F. Q.* iii. 1. 43.

25 333. **Stoop.** *Cf. Il P.* 72.

25 334. **Disinherit.** Dispossess; see Schmidt for Shakspere's use of "inherit."

25 335. **Double night,** etc. "The natural darkness of night and the local darkness of the woods" (Masson). *Cf. S. A.* 593.

25 338. **Wicker hole.** What is meant?

25 340. **Rule.** Line, ray; in the prose and poetry of our language there are many descriptions of the same thing, some of which will readily recur to the mind. What effect is the alliteration in this line intended to produce?

25 341. **Star of Arcady,** etc. Any star in the constellation of the Greater Bear. *Tyrian Cynosure*, the Lesser Bear, the constellation by which the *Tyrian* or Phœnician mariners steered. See on *L'Al.* 80; look up the myths of Callisto and Arcas in *Class. Dict.*, which will explain the phrase *of Arcady*.

26 345. **Pastoral reed.** Shepherd's pipe. *Oaten stops*, holes in the oaten stem of which the shepherd's pipe is made. See on *Lyc.* 33.

26 349. **Innumerous.** Innumerable; *cf. P. L.* vii. 455.

26 356. **What if,** etc. Supply the ellipsis in this line.

26 358. **Savage hunger,** etc. "The hunger of savage beasts, or the lust of men as savage as they" (Newton).

26 359. **Over-exquisite.** Too inquisitive; look up etymology of *exquisite*.

26 360. **Cast the fashion.** Foretell the form. If this interpretation is correct, the metaphor is from astrology, and not from medicine, metallurgy, or accounts, as has been variously explained.

26 361. **Be so.** That is, be really evils. Is this line necessary?

26 362. **What.** Why.

26 363. **Run to meet,** etc. What proverb is alluded to? *Cf. Much Ado* i. 1. 96–97.

26 366. **So to seek.** So at a loss; *cf. P. L.* viii. 197.

26 367. **Unprincipled.** Ungrounded in the principles of.

26 370. **Not being in danger,** etc. "Lord Monboddo greatly admired this parenthesis, and pointed out how the voice of the speaker must have varied its tone in passing from the first clause to the second" (Masson).

27 373–375. **Virtue could see,** etc. *Cf. R. and J.* iii. 2. 8–9; also *F. Q.* i. 1. 12: "Vertue gives her selfe light through darkenesse for to wade." Ben Jonson, in *Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue*, says of Virtue:

> "She, she it is in darkness shines,
> 'T is she that still herself refines,
> By her own light to every eye."

27 375. **Flat sea.** *Cf. Lyc.* 98.

27 375–380. **And wisdom's self,** etc. It has been pointed out that these lines describe Milton's life at Horton, 1632–1637.

27 376. **Seeks to.** Resorts to; "common in our translation of the Bible" (Todd).

27 377. **Contemplation.** *Cf. Il P.* 54.

27 380. **All to-ruffled.** In Milton's editions printed *all to rufft'd*, which has been variously emended: (1) *all too ruffled;* (2) *all-to ruffled;* (3) *all to-ruffled.* Of these the last has the most to support it, and means "quite ruffled up"; the other readings may be interpreted as (1) "much too ruffled," and (2) "altogether ruffled." See Masson's note and *New Eng. Dict. s.v. All*, C. 14, 15.

27 382. **I' the centre.** That is, in the center of the earth; *cf. P. L.* i. 74, 686, *P. R.* iv. 534.

27 385. **Himself is his own dungeon.** *Cf. S. A.* 155–156, *P. L.* i. 254–255.

27 385–389. **'T is most true,** etc. *Cf. Il P.* 167–174.

27 386. **Affects.** Likes, prefers; with no sense of doing so for effect.

27 389. **As safe,** etc. "Milton was thinking of the Roman *Curia.* Twenty years later Cromwell showed, April 20th, 1653, that the great English Council-chamber was not inviolable" (Verity).

27 390. **Weeds.** See on *L'Al.* 120.

27 393. **Hesperian.** The Hesperides were the sisters, who, assisted

by the dragon Ladon, guarded the golden apples of Juno. To slay this dragon and secure the fruit was one of the labors of Hercules. See *Class. Dict.*

27 395. **Unenchanted.** Explain; see on *L'Al.* 40.

27 398. **Unsunned.** *Cf. F. Q.* ii. 7. Heading:

> "Gunyon findes Mamon in a delve,
> Sunning his treasure hore."

27 401. **Wink on.** Shut the eyes to, seem not to see; or possibly, give a significant look to. *Cf. A. Y. L.* i. 3. 112.

27 402. **A single.** Trent inserts a comma after *single*. Any difference in meaning?

28 403. **Surrounding.** What was the original meaning of the word?

28 404. **Of night or loneliness.** *Cf.* 369. *It recks me not*, I take no account; *cf. Lyc.* 122.

28 408. **Infer.** Argue.

28 409. **Without all doubt.** Beyond all doubt.

28 413. **Suspicion.** Pronounce.

28 419. **If.** Even if.

28–30 420–475. **'T is chastity,** etc. This passage, says Masson, "is not only a concentrated expression of the moral of the whole Masque, but also an exposition of what was a cardinal idea with Milton through his whole life, and perhaps the most central idea of his personal philosophy in early manhood."

28 421. **Complete steel.** See on 4; *cf. Ham.* i. 4. 52.

28 422. **A quivered nymph,** etc. *Cf.* Spenser's description of Belphœbe, *F. Q.* ii. 3. 29, 31.

28 423. **Trace.** Traverse. *Cf. M. N. D.* ii. 1. 25. *Unharboured*, unharboring; sometimes interpreted "yielding no shelter."

28 424. **Infamous.** Pronounce.

28 425. **The sacred rays,** etc. *Cf.* 782.

28 426. **Bandite.** So spelled by Milton. *Mountaineer*, as Warton notes, is here an opprobrious term; *cf. Cymb.* iv. 2. 120. Contrast the present use of the word.

28 428. **Very.** Veritable; *very* is here an adjective.

28 429. **Horrid.** Meaning? *Cf. horror*, 38, and Latin *horridus*. How is the word sometimes abused?

29 432. **Some say,** etc. *Cf. Ham.* i. 1. 158–164; Newton cites Fletcher, *Faithful Shepherdess*, i. 1:

"Yet I have heard (my mother told it me,
And now I do believe it), if I keep
My virgin-flower uncropt, pure, chaste, and fair,
No goblin, wood-god, fairy, elf, or fiend,
Satyr, or other power that haunts the groves,
Shall hurt my body, or by vain illusion
Draw me to wander after idle fires;
Or voices calling me in dead of night,
To make me follow, and so tole me on,
Through mire and standing pools, to find my ruin."

What differences do you find between ll. 432–437, 438–452, and 453–475?

28 433. **Or fire.** See on *L'Al.* 104; *cf. P. L.* ix. 634–642.

29 434. **Blue.** "There were witches to represent most colours" (Verity), but *blue* here may refer to the appearance of the hag. *Unlaid ghost*, a ghost that has not been "laid" or exorcised; *cf. Cymb.* iv. 2. 278. For some interesting superstitions entertained regarding ghosts, see Brand, *Popular Antiquities.*

29 435. **Curfew.** See on *Il P.* 74; for the popular superstition that ghosts would wander about from curfew until the first cockcrow, *cf. Lear* iii. 4. 120–121.

29 436. **Goblin.** See on *L'Al.* 105. *Swart; cf. Lyc.* 138. Warton and Todd give numerous instances of the superstition which supposed that mines were inhabited by various sorts of spirits.

29 438–440. **Do ye believe,** etc. *Cf.* the latter part of the justly famous passage on "Athens, the eye of Greece," *P. R.* iv. 236–284.

29 442. **Silver-shafted queen.** "The epithet is applicable to Diana both as huntress and goddess of the moon: as the former she bore arrows which were frequently called *shafts*, and as the latter she bore shafts or rays of light" (Bell).

29 443. **Brinded.** *Cf. Macb.* iv. 1. 1.

29 445. **The frivolous bolt of Cupid.** Verity objects that "Cupid was said to have two kinds of darts, one with a golden, the other with a leaden tip; the former to cause, the latter to repel, love," and quotes Ovid, *Met.* i. 469–471; but Milton, who was certainly aware of this fact, evidently depends upon the context, and the epithet *frivolous* (especially characteristic of the golden bolt), to make clear his meaning.

29 447. **Snaky-headed Gorgon shield.** *Cf. Iliad* v. 738–741: "About her shoulders cast she the tasselled aegis terrible . . . and therein is the dreadful monster's Gorgon head, dreadful and grim,

portent of aegis-bearing Zeus." For *snaky-headed*, look up the myth of Perseus and Medusa in *Class. Dict.*

29 449. **Freezed.** On the tendency of strong verbs to become weak consult some good history of the English language, — Emerson's or Lounsbury's. *Congealed;* see on 4.

29 450. **Rigid looks,** etc. "*Rigid looks* refer to *snaky* locks, and *noble grace* to the beautiful face, as Gorgon is represented on ancient gems" (Warburton, quoted by Todd).

29 451. **Dashed.** Put out of countenance; *cf. L. L. L.* v. 2. 585.

29 452. **Blank awe.** Explain.

29 455. **Lackey.** Attend as lackies, or servants.

29 457. **Vision.** A trisyllable; *cf.* 298.

29 458. **Things that no gross ear can hear.** *Cf.* 784, *Arcades* 73. See on 112.

29–30 459–463. **Till oft converse,** etc. *Cf. P. L.* v. 404–503, where the doctrine is developed more at length. *Oft converse*, frequent intercourse. *Heavenly habitants; cf.* 455.

29 462. **Turns.** We should expect the subjunctive here, as in 460, but perhaps Masson is right in suggesting that the syntax is intentionally abnormal; "as if certainty had so increased before the second clause that it could be stated as a fact."

30 463–475. **But, when lust,** etc. Warton was the first to perceive that the doctrine here expounded is from Plato's *Phædo*. See Jowett, *Dialogues of Plato* (third edition), Vol. II. pp. 224–225.

30 469. **Divine.** Pronounce.

30 473. **It.** What should we have expected?

30 474. **Sensualty.** So spelled by Milton.

30 478. **But musical,** etc. Shakspere had previously said this of Love; *cf. L. L. L.* iv. 3. 342–343. The present passage is usually taken as a compliment to Plato.

30 483. **Night-foundered.** Explain; *cf. P. L.* i. 204.

30 486. **Sister.** Lowell notes that "the *e* is elided from the word *sister* by its preceding a vowel." — *Works* (Houghton), Vol. IV. p. 108, note.

31 490. **That hallo,** etc. The edition printed by Lawes in 1637 has the following stage-direction: "He hallos; the Guardian Dæmon hallos again, and enters in the habit of a shepherd." What is the effect of the succession of hallos (*cf.* 481, 486, 487, 490)?

31 491. **Iron stakes.** *Cf.* 487.

31 492. **Young.** Stress.

31 494. **Thyrsis.** See on *L'Al.* 83–88; in *Epitaphium Damonis*, Milton represents himself as Thyrsis, and in his poem entitled *Thyrsis* Matthew Arnold sings of his friend Clough. The name has been freely used in pastoral poetry from the time of Theocritus to the present.

31 495–512. **The huddling brook,** etc. Note the rhymed couplets in this passage. Why are they used?

31 495. **Huddling.** Explain. To what legend is there an allusion in this passage? *Cf. L'Al.* 145–150, etc.

31 501. **His next joy.** Rolfe takes this as referring to the younger brother, but if *next* be used in the sense of "nearest," "dearest," a sense frequent enough in Elizabethan English, it may be addressed to the elder brother.

31 502. **Toy.** See on *Il P.* 4.

31 506. **To.** Force of *to?*

31 507. **Where is she?** But see 562 *et seq.*

31 508. **How chance,** etc. See Abbott, § 37.

31 509. **Sadly.** See on 189.

31 512. **Shew.** Pronounce.

31 515. **Sage poets.** Milton refers especially to Homer and Virgil, though there is a possibility of his having Spenser and Tasso also in mind. In *P. L.* iii. 19, he repeats *taught by the heavenly Muse.*

32 516. **Storied.** Explain; *cf. Il P.* 159.

32 517. **Dire Chimeras.** *Cf. P. L.* ii. 628. *Enchanted isles;* referring, probably, to the islands of Circe and Calypso (*Odyssey*), although Verity thinks the "Wandering Islands" of the *F. Q.* ii. 12. 11 *et seq.* are meant. Spenser, he adds, there follows Tasso's account of the isle of Armida.

32 520. **Navel.** Center. The editors note that Delphi was named the *navel* of the earth.

32 521. **A sorcerer,** etc. See 46 *et seq.*, and on 58.

32 526. **Murmurs.** Incantations; *cf.* 817, *Arcades* 60, and Statius, *Thebais* ix. 732–733 (quoted by Todd):

> *Cantusque sacros et conscia miscet*
> *Murmura.*

32 529. **Reason.** *Cf. P. L.* v. 100–102.

32 530. **Charactered.** Impressed, stamped. The word is accented on the second syllable; being used in its original sense (Gr. χαρακτήρ), it continues the metaphor, which is taken from the process of melting down coins.

32 531. **Crofts.** "A piece of enclosed ground, used for tillage or pasture: in most localities a small piece of arable land adjacent to a house" (*New Eng. Dict.*). Milton's use of the word here, as Murray remarks, suggests the sense of the Dutch word *kroft, krocht*, which he defines as "prominent rocky height, high and dry land, field on the downs."

32 532. **Brow.** Overhang; *cf. L'Al.* 8. *Whence;* explain.

32 533. **Monstrous rout.** See on *Lyc.* 158.

32 534. **Stabled wolves.** Wolves in their dens, although some editors interpret "wolves that have got into the sheepfold." But compare *P. L.* xi. 751–752, and Virgil, *Æneid* vi. 179: *stabula alta ferarum* (quoted by Bell).

32 535. **Hecate.** See on 135.

32 539. **Unweeting.** Unwitting.

32 540. **By then.** By the time that; or perhaps *by then . . . fold* is parenthetical.

32 542. **Dew-besprent.** Sprinkled with dew; *cf. Lyc.* 29.

32 545. **Flaunting honeysuckle.** *Cf. Lyc.* 40.

32 546. **Melancholy.** Pensive contemplation; a sense now rare. "This line contains the gist of *Il Penseroso*" (Trent).

33 547. **To meditate.** Probably "to practise"; see on *Lyc.* 66.

33 548. **Close.** "The conclusion of a musical phrase, theme, or movement; a CADENCE" (*New Eng. Dict.*). Which idea best suits the present passage? *Cf. Nat.* 99–100.

33 550. **Barbarous.** Etymological meaning?

33 552. **An unusual stop.** See 145.

33 553. **Drowsy-flighted.** "Always drowsily-flying" (Masson). The reading in the text is from the *Cambridge MS.*, which gives *drowsy flighted;* both of Milton's editions, as well as Lawes's edition of 1637, have *drowsie frighted.* If Milton intended the latter, the meaning would probably be "the drowsy steeds that have been frightened" (Masson). Some editors print *drowsy-frighted*, and explain *frighted* as "freighted."

33 554. **Close-curtained Sleep.** *Cf.* Shakspere's "The curtain'd Sleep," *Macb.* ii. 1. 51; see also my edition of *The Ancient Mariner* (The Macmillan Company), p. 88.

33 555–562. **At last,** etc. The reference is to the Echo song (230); the lines themselves constitute Milton's finest compliment to Lady Alice.

33 556. **Rose like a steam,** etc. *Cf. T. N.* i. 1. 1–7; the second edition has *stream*, and so spoils the comparison.

33 557. **That.** So that; *cf. P. L.* iv. 604.

33 560. **Still.** Always, ever.

33 561. **Create a soul,** etc. See Masson's note for Warburton's absurd suggestion as to the origin of this passage, and Trent's note for another of the same sort. By all means look up the famous description of Death in *P. L.* ii. 666–673.

33 568. **Lawns.** See on *L'Al.* 71.

33 572. **By certain signs.** *Cf.* 644.

33 573. **Prevent.** Anticipate; as often in Shakspere.

34 585. **Period.** Sentence. *For me,* as far as I am concerned.

34 586–599. **Against the threats,** etc. "A peculiarly Miltonic passage: one of those that ought to be got by heart both on their own account and in memory of Milton" (Masson).

34 591. **Meant most harm.** Meant to be most harmful.

34 592. **Happy trial.** Explain.

34 598–599. **The pillared firmament,** etc. What, then, is his conception of the universe? *Cf. P. R.* iv. 455.

34 603. **Legions.** A trisyllable.

34 604. **Acheron.** A river in Hell, but here put for the whole region; *cf. P. L.* ii. 575 *et seq.* Todd quotes: "All hell run out, and sooty flags display," P. Fletcher, *Locusts* (1627).

34 605. **Harpies and Hydras.** See *Class. Dict.*

34 606. **'Twixt Africa and Ind.** What have you read about this region which would make Milton's reference appropriate?

35 607. **Purchase.** "Acquisition of any kind and by any means" (Schmidt). In *Cymb.* i. 4. 91, the word is used, as here, in the sense of "ill-gotten gains." Is there any word in the line which includes the sense of *back?* Why, then, was the word added? Can you find any other instances of the sort?

35 608. **The curls.** Note the indirect description. What characteristic in Comus does this detail bring out?

35 610. **Emprise.** Enterprise.

35 611. **Stead.** Help, service.

35 617. **Utmost shifts.** See on 273.

35 619–628. **A certain shepherd lad,** etc. There is probably a reference here to Charles Diodati, Milton's bosom friend, whose death in 1638 inspired the *Epitaphium Damonis.* On Diodati's botanical knowledge, see *E. D.* 150–154.

35 620. **To see to.** To look at; *cf. Ezekiel* xxiii. 15.

35 621. **Virtuous.** See on *Il P.* 113.

35 626. **Scrip.** Wallet, small bag.

35 627. **Simples.** Medicinal herbs; *cf. R. and J.* v. 1. 40.

35 630. **But.** Effect of using this word here, and in 632, 633?

35 633. **Bore.** Subject?

35 634. **Like.** Correspondingly.

36 635. **Clouted shoon.** Shoes "having the sole protected with iron plates, or studded with large-headed nails" (*New Eng. Dict.*); but the meaning may also be "shoes mended with clouts or patches." *Cf. 2 Hen. VI.* iv. 2. 195.

36 636. **Moly.** *Cf. Odyssey* x. 281 *et seq.*, but especially 302–306: "Therewith the slayer of Argos gave me the plant that he had plucked from the ground, and he showed me the growth thereof. It was black at the root, but the flower was like to milk. Moly the gods call it, but it is hard for mortal men to dig; howbeit with the gods all things are possible" (Butcher and Lang). Ulysses used the plant as an antidote against Circe's spells. How do you scan this line?

36 638. **Hæmony.** There may be here a reference to *Hæmonia*, an old name for Thessaly, the land of magic. For Coleridge's explanation of the name, as well as for his very curious allegorical interpretation of ll. 629–641, see *Letters of S. T. Coleridge* (Houghton), Vol. I. pp. 406–407.

36 639. **Sovran.** "Supremely medicinal and efficacious" (Schmidt); as often in Shakspere.

36 640. **Mildew blast.** *Cf. Ham.* iii. 4. 64.

36 641. **Furies.** See *Class. Dict.*; Verity, however, interprets "evil fairies." *Apparition;* five syllables.

36 642. **Little reckoning made.** *Cf. Lyc.* 116.

36 646. **Lime-twigs.** Snares; literally twigs smeared with bird-lime for catching birds. Shakspere uses the word in *2 Hen. VI.* iii. 3. 16.

36 649. **Necromancer.** Etymological meaning?

36 650–652. **With dauntless hardihood,** etc. So Ulysses sprang upon Circe with a drawn sword (*Odyssey* x. 321–322), and so Gunyon broke the glass of Acrasia (*F. Q.* ii. 12. 57).

36 653. **But seize his wand.** *Cf. Temp.* iii. 2. 95–103.

36 655. **Vomit smoke.** *Cf.* Virgil, *Æneid* viii. 252–253:

> *Faucibus ingentem fumum, mirabile dictu,*
> *Evomit;*

which is said of the giant Cacus, one of the sons of Vulcan.

36–37 659–665. **Nay, Lady,** etc. See Garnett, *Milton*, p. 54, for a similar train of thought in Calderon's *Magico Prodigioso*, which was acted in 1637 but unknown to Milton. A writer in the *New Monthly Magazine*, Vol. VII. p. 227, objects that in the dialogue between Comus and the Lady (659–813), "Comus . . . has the poetry, and the lady the metaphysics." Do you see any objection to this? Was there any way to avoid this?

37 661. **Daphne.** Daphne, pursued by Apollo, was, at her own request, changed into a laurel tree. See *Class. Dict.*; note the inversion in this passage.

37 664. **This corporal rind.** "This fleshly nook," *Il P.* 92.

37 665. **While.** So long as.

37 672–675. **And first,** etc. For arrangement of lines in *Cambridge MS.*, see Verity.

37 672. **Julep.** Look up etymological meaning of *julep* and *syrup* (674).

37 673. **His.** Its.

37 675–678. **Not that Nepenthes,** etc. *Cf. Odyssey* iv. 220 *et seq.*: "Presently she [Helen] cast a drug into the wine whereof they drank, a drug to lull all pain and anger, and bring forgetfulness of every sorrow. Whoso should drink a draught thereof, when it is mingled in the bowl, on that day he would let no tear fall down his cheeks, not though his mother and his father died, not though men slew his brother or dear son with the sword before his face, and his own eyes beheld it. Medicines of such virtue and so helpful had the daughter of Zeus, which Polydamna, the wife of Thon, had given her, a woman of Egypt" (Butcher and Lang). In his note to *Odyssey* iv. 220, Merry says it is impossible to say what this drug (φάρμακον) was. "Plutarch thought it only symbolised the glamour of Helen's eloquence: many moderns think it refers to opium." See what Spenser says of the drink, *F. Q.* iv. 3. 43.

37 679. **Why should you,** etc. *Cf.* Shakspere, *Sonnets* i. 8.

37 680. **Which Nature lent.** *Cf. M. for M.* i. 1. 37–41.

37 685. **Unexempt condition.** Condition from which no one is exempt. *Condition* is a quadrisyllable.

37 686. **Mortal frailty.** "Weak mortals: abstract for concrete" (Bell).

37 688. **That.** The antecedent is *you* (682).

38 694. **Aspects.** Pronounce; *cf. R. of L.* 452.

38 695. **Oughly-headed.** "So in both Milton's editions" (Masson).

38 698. **Vizared falsehood.** Explain.

38 700. **Liquorish.** Lickerish, tempting to the taste.

38 702–703. **None,** etc. Newton traces this thought to Euripides, *Medea* 618.

38 707. **Budge.** "Solemn in demeanour, important-looking, pompous, stiff, formal" (*New Eng. Dict.*), though Murray suggests that possibly "*budge doctor* may have originally meant one who wore budge fur." This last consisted of lamb's skin with the wool dressed outwards.

38 708. **Cynic tub.** The allusion is to the tub of Diogenes, the cynic philosopher of Athens. L. 709 explains the reason of Comus's opposition to the Stoics and Cynics.

38 719. **Hutched.** Shut up as in a *hutch.*

39 721. **Pulse.** Peas, beans, lentils, etc.; *Cf. Daniel* i. 8–16.

39 722. **Frieze.** A coarse woolen cloth with a shaggy nap on one side.

39 729. **Strangled.** Suffocated; *cf. R. and J.* iv. 3. 35.

39 730. **Plumes.** Wings.

39 732. **O'erfraught.** Over-freighted, over-loaded; *cf. Macb.* iv. 3. 210.

39–40 739–755. **Beauty is Nature's coin,** etc. The editors cite many parallel passages from the old poets. To take Shakspere alone, *cf. Sonnets* i.–xvii., *V. and A.* 163–174, *M. N. D.* i. 1. 76–78, and *R. and J.* i. 1. 221–226.

39 743. **If you,** etc. Scan this line.

39 747. **Most.** The largest number of people.

39 749. **They had,** etc. *Cf.* 325; see on 322. *Complexions;* a quadrisyllable.

40 750. **Grain.** Color; see on *Il P.* 33. What figure do you find in this line?

40 751. **Sampler.** *Cf. M. N. D.* iii. 2. 203–205. *Tease,* comb or card; a term drawn from the art of cloth-manufacture.

40 752. **Vermeil-tinctured.** Vermilion-colored.

40 753. **Love-darting eyes.** There is nothing original in this line. Sylvester had used "love-darting Eyn"; Homer also had applied the epithet "fair-tressed" (ἐυπλόκαμος) to Dawn, *Odyssey* v. 390.

40 755. **You are but young yet.** "Not only is *yet* an expletive, and makes the verse inharmonious, but the syllables *young* and *yet* coming together would of themselves be intolerable anywhere" (Landor). Landor thinks he detects elsewhere an occasional unnecessary word, as, for example, in ll. 601, 610, etc.

40 756–761. **I had not,** etc. Spoken aside.

40 758. **As mine eyes.** What should be supplied after *as?*

40 759. **Pranked in reason's garb.** Hunter facetiously remarks that "Milton had become *a modern poet* when he wrote 'Thus Belial, with words *clothed* in reason's garb.'" *P. L.* ii. 226.

40 760. **Bolt.** Refine; the metaphor is from milling. *Cf. Cor.* iii. 1. 322.

40 763. **As if she would,** etc. For lines on the same model, *cf. P. L.* ix. 249, *P. R.* i. 302, *S. A.* 868; also see De Quincey, *Works* (Masson), Vol. XI. p. 467, note.

40 767. **Spare Temperance.** *Cf. Il P.* 46; contrast 721, above.

40 768–774. **If every just man,** etc. *Cf. Lear* iv. 1. 67–74 (Todd).

40 773. **In unsuperfluous,** etc. Scan the line, making *proportion* a quadrisyllable.

40–41 779–806. **Shall I go on,** etc. Wanting in *Cambridge* and *Bridgewater MSS.*

40–41 780–799. **To him that dares,** etc. Another recurrence, as Masson points out, to the leading doctrine of the masque. See on 420–475.

41 783. **Yet to what' end?** Note the use of the Rhetorical question. Find other instances.

41 784. **Thou hast nor ear.** See on 997. *Nor . . . nor,* neither . . . nor.

41 785. **Sublime.** See on 4.

41 791. **Fence.** Art of fencing; referring, of course, to the power of fencing with words.

41 792–799. **Thou art not fit,** etc. "What a magnificent passage! how little poetry in any language is comparable to this, which closes the lady's reply, . . . This is worthy of Shakespeare himself in his highest mood, and is unattained and unattainable by any other poet. What a transport of enthusiasm! what a burst of harmony! He who writes one sentence equal to this, will have reached a higher rank in poetry than any has done since this was written" (Landor).

41 793. **Uncontrollèd.** Uncontrollable, and hence irresistible; as in Shakspere.

41 797. **Brute Earth.** A translation of *bruta tellus,* Horace, *Odes* i. 34. 9 (Warton).

41 800–806. **She fables not,** etc. Spoken aside. *Fables; cf. 1 Hen. VI.* iv. 2. 42.

41 802. **And, though,** etc. Scan this line; note the transferred epithet.

41 804. **Erebus.** See *Class. Dict.*; on the whole passage, see on *Il P.* 30.

41 808. **Canon laws of our foundation.** There is an evident incongruity in Comus's application of what Keightley has called "the language of universities and other foundations." Warburton was so impressed with this fact that he wrote "*Canon laws*, a joke!"

41 809–810. **Lees,** etc. Todd quotes Nash, *Terrors of the Night* (1594): "The grossest part of our blood is the melancholy humour; which, in the spleen congealed (whose office it is to displace it), with his thick-steaming fenny vapours casts a mist over the spirit. . . . It [melancholy] sinketh down to the bottom like the lees of the wine, corrupteth all the blood, and is the cause of lunacy." *Cf. S. A.* 599 *et seq.*, Burton, *Anatomy of Melancholy, passim.*

41 811. **Straight.** See on *L'Al.* 69.

42 813. **The Brothers rush,** etc. In the *Cambridge* and *Bridgewater MSS.*, the Attendant Spirit comes in with the brothers, but his entrance after the escape of Comus is more in keeping with the chiding that follows.

42 814. **Have you let,** etc. How does the escape of Comus help Milton's plot?

42 815. **Ye should,** etc. See 653.

42 816–817. **Without his rod reversed,** etc. The traditional method of undoing the effects of enchantment; Warton quotes Ovid, *Met.* xiv. 299–301, *F. Q.* iii. 12. 30 *et seq.*

42 822. **Melibœus.** Spenser is probably meant, since he told the legend of Sabrina (*F. Q.* ii. 10. 14–19) and answers to the description in the next line. Some, however, take *Melibœus* to be Geoffrey of Monmouth, from whose *Historia Regum Britanniae* (1147) Milton afterwards drew the story for his own *History of Britain* (1670). If this be so, what follows is sarcasm, for Geoffrey of Monmouth was not a *shepherd* (poet), and was anything but *the soothest* of men. The name *Melibœus* is taken from pastoral poetry.

42 823. **Soothest.** Truest; look up etymology.

42 825. **Moist curb.** Why the epithet?

42 826. **Sabrina.** The following is the version in Milton's *History of Britain:* "Among the spoils of [Humber's] camp and navy, were found certain young maids, and Estrildis above the rest, passing fair, the daughter of a king in Germany; from whence Humber, as he went wasting the seacoast, had led her captive: whom Locrine, though before contracted to the daughter of Corineus, resolves to marry. But being forced and threatened by Corineus, whose authority and power he

feared, Gwendolen the daughter he yields to marry, but in secret loves the other: and ofttimes retiring, as to some private sacrifice, through vaults and passages made under ground, and seven years thus enjoying her, had by her a daughter equally fair, whose name was Sabra. But when once his fear was off by the death of Corineus, not content with secret enjoyment, divorcing Gwendolen, he makes Estrildis now his queen. Gwendolen, all in a rage, departs into Cornwall, where Madan, the son she had by Locrine, was hitherto brought up by Corineus his grandfather. And gathering an army of her father's friends and subjects, gives battle to her husband by the river Sture; wherein Locrine, shot with an arrow, ends his life. But not so ends the fury of Gwendolen; for Estrildis, and her daughter Sabra, she throws into a river: and, to leave a moment of revenge, proclaims that the stream be thenceforth called after the damsel's name; which, by length of time, is changed now to Sabrina, or Severn."—*Prose Works of Milton* (Philadelphia, 1856), Vol. II. p. 203.

42 832. **His.** Its.

42 835. **Nereus.** See *Class. Dict.*

42 836. **Lank.** Drooping.

43 838. **Nectared lavers.** Explain. *Asphodil;* in Greek mythology, *Asphodel* was the pale flower of Hades and the dead; in modern times, we have *daffodil* and *daffydowndilly* corrupted from *asphodil.*

43 839. **Porch.** *Cf. Ham.* i. 5. 63.

43 841. **A quick immortal change.** See on 10.

43 845. **Urchin blasts.** Blights (upon corn, cattle, etc.) sent by the hedgehog, or, possibly, since mischievous elves were supposed to assume the shape of the hedgehog, the injuries done by bad fairies. *Cf. Temp.* ii. 2. 1–14.

43 846. **The shrewd meddling elf.** "Hardly Robin Goodfellow, but one of his fraternity" (Masson). See on *L'Al.* 105.

43 850. **Throw sweet garland wreaths,** etc. *Cf.* Spenser, *Prothalamion.*

43 852. **The old swain.** Melibœus (822); but neither Spenser nor Monmouth has this detail. Drayton, however, says that Sabrina was

> "by Nereus taught, the most profoundly wise,
> That learned her the skill of hidden prophecies,
> By Thetis' special care" (*Polyolbion*, fifth song).

43 863. **Amber-dropping hair.** "Hair of amber color with the waterdrops falling through it" (Masson).

**43** 865. **Goddess of the silver lake.** *Cf.* 842.

**44** 867–889. **Listen,** etc. Many of the epithets in these lines can be traced to classical writers. The following mythological allusions may be noted: *Oceanus*, the god of the great ocean-stream which was anciently supposed to encircle the earth, was the founder of the older dynasty of the sea; *Neptune*, god of the sea after Saturn was overthrown, was the founder of the younger dynasty; *Tethys* was the wife of Oceanus; *Nereus* was the father of the Nereïds; *the Carpathian wizard* was Proteus, who had the prophetic gift and could change his shape at will; *Triton*, the son of Neptune and Amphitrite, was the trumpeter of the ocean, and with his sea-shell could stir up or allay the waves; *Glaucus* was the Bœotian fisherman, who, having eaten a certain herb, was changed into a sea-god with prophetic powers; *Leucothea* was Ino, the daughter of Cadmus, and who, in order to escape her mad husband Athamas, plunged into the sea with her son Melicertes and became a sea-goddess; *her son* was the above-mentioned Melicertes who, after he became a sea-god, was called Palæmon; *Thetis*, one of the daughters of Nereus, is best known as the mother of Achilles; the *Sirens* were those whose sweet singing drew seafarers to their destruction; *Parthenope* and *Ligea* were sirens (see on 253).

**44** 880. **Ligea's golden comb.** Keightley observes that the comb belongs to the mermaids of the Northern mythology, rather than to the sirens of Greek mythology.

**44** 891. **Grows.** See on *Lyc.* 7.

**44** 893. **Azurn.** Azure; the form seems to be peculiar to Milton.

**44** 894. **Turkis.** Turquoise.

**45** 897. **Printless feet.** *Cf. Temp.* v. 1. 34. The idea of a light tread is a common one in poetry.

**45** 898. **Velvet head.** *Cf.* Fletcher, *The Faithful Shepherdess* ii. 1:

> "See the dew-drops how they kiss
> Every little flower that is;
> Hanging on their velvet heads,
> Like a rope of crystal beads."

As Browne notes, there are many resemblances between this part of *Comus* and Fletcher's *Faithful Shepherdess*.

**45** 904. **To undo,** etc. *Cf.* 852–853.

**45** 914. **Thrice.** Masson quotes Browne's *Inner Temple Masque*, where Circe rouses Ulysses from sleep:

"Thrice I charge thee by my wand;
Thrice with moly from my hand
Do I touch Ulysses' eyes," etc.

On the use of odd numbers, see my edition of *The Ancient Mariner* (The Macmillan Company), pp. 72–73.

45 916. **This marble venomed seat.** See stage-direction at 658.

45 919. **His.** Its.

45 921. **Amphitrite.** The wife of Neptune; see on 867–889.

45 923. **Anchises' line.** Legend had it that Anchises was the father of Æneas, who was the father of Ascanius, who was the father of Silvius, who was the father of Brutus (see 828), who was the father of Locrine.

46 924–937. **May thy brimmèd waves,** etc. "The whole of this poetical blessing on the Severn and its neighbourhood, involving at the end, though in purposely gorgeous language, the wish of what we should call 'solid commercial prosperity,' would go to the heart of the assemblage at Ludlow" (Masson). Note the beauty and effectiveness of the epithet *brimmèd*.

46 927. **The snowy hills.** The Welsh mountains.

46 929. **Thy tresses fair.** Alluding to what?

46 932–937. **May thy billows,** etc. "Here Milton's glance seems to quiver irregularly along the course of the Severn: first taking it at its mouth in Gloucestershire, where it opens into a sea-firth, and where alone it could be properly said to have 'billows'; then mounting to its 'lofty head' in Welsh Plinlimmon, and following it thence through Montgomeryshire to Shrewsbury and so through the rest of its curve" (Masson). The construction of the last two lines is difficult, but the thought probably is: "And may thy head be crowned here and there upon thy banks with groves of myrrh and cinnamon." The reader should keep in mind both the literal and figurative signification of the whole speech.

47 956. **The stars grow high.** Explain. Note the time indicated in l. 957. Is there any reason for the length of that line?

47 959. **Sun-shine holiday.** *Cf. L'Al.* 98.

47 961. **Other trippings.** Note the contrast between the two styles of dances.

47 966–975. **Noble Lord,** etc. "Imagine the cheering when Lawes, advancing with the three young ones, addressed this speech to the Earl and Countess of Bridgewater, they perhaps rising and bowing. When the speech was ended, there was more dancing, in which other ladies

and gentlemen, we are to suppose, figured with Lady Alice and her Brothers; after which nothing remained but Lawes's *Epilogue*" (Masson).

47 972. **Assays.** Trials.

48 976–979. **To the ocean,** etc. For rhythm and rhyme, Masson compares *Temp.* v. 1. 88–91. There seems to be a kindred between Milton's Attendant Spirit, as he is represented in this portion of the Masque (976–1023), and Shakspere's Ariel (*Temp.*) and Puck (*M. N. D.*).

48 979. **The broad fields of the sky.** *Cf.* Virgil, *Æneid* vi. 888: *Aeris in campis latis* (Warton).

48 982–983. **The gardens,** etc. See on 393; the numbers and names of the daughters of Hesperus are variously given. *Golden tree;* Milton may call the tree *golden* merely because of the fruit (*cf.* 394), but if he means the tree itself he has Ovid (*Met.* iv. 637) as his authority.

48 984. **Crispèd.** Curled; by the wind ruffling the leaves. *Cf. P. L.* iv. 237. Elton, however, suggests that the idea may be "curled . . . as in spring, when the leaves are unfolding."

48 990. **Cedarn.** First used by Milton; the word has been used with fine effect by some modern poets, as, for example, by Coleridge, in *Kubla Khan,* by Tennyson, in *Recollections of the Arabian Nights,* by Arnold, in *The New Sirens,* and by Whittier, in *The Poet and the Children.*

48 992. **Bow.** The rainbow, of which Iris was the goddess. See on 83.

48 993. **Blow.** Cause to bloom; more frequently used as in *Lyc.* 48.

48 995. **Purfled.** Define.

48 997. **If your ears be true.** If your ears be attuned; *cf. Arcades* 72–73, *M. of V.* v. 1. 64–65.

48 999–1000. **Where young Adonis,** etc. *Adonis,* who was beloved of Venus, identified below with *the Assyrian queen,* Astarte, was said to have been slain by a wild boar. There also seems to be a reference here to the Garden of Adonis, described with so much beauty in the *F. Q.* iii. 6. 29 *et seq.*, and referred to later by Milton in *P. L.* ix. 439–441. *Cf.* Bion's *Lament for Adonis* and Shakspere's *Venus and Adonis.*

49 1005. **Psyche.** For the myth of Cupid and Psyche, and its allegorical interpretation, see *Class. Dict.* See Beers, *Hist. of Eng. Rom.*, p. 16; a number of valuable references will be found in Gayley, *Classic Myths in English Literature.*

49 1011. **Youth and Joy.** Later in life, when Milton wrote his *Apology for Smectymnuus*, he made "Knowledge and Virtue" the offspring of Psyche's divine generation.

49 1015. **Bowed welkin.** Arched sky.

49 1016–1017. **And from thence,** etc. *Cf. M. N. D.* iv. 1. 101–102, ii. 1. 175; *Macb.* iii. 5. 23–25.

49 1017. **Corners.** Horns (Latin *cornua*).

49 1021. **The sphery chime.** The music of the spheres; on this peculiar use of the adjective, which is common enough in Shakspere, see Schmidt, p. 1415 *et seq.*

49 1022–1023. **Or, if Virtue,** etc. When at Geneva in 1639, Milton wrote the following autograph (all in his own hand except the date) in an album:

"— if Vertue feeble were
Heaven it selfe would stoope to her.
Cælum non animum muto dum trans mare curro.

JOANNES MILTONIUS.
*Junii* 10, 1639. Anglus."

"If we combine the English lines with the Latin addition, it is as if he said 'The closing words of my own *Comus* are a permanent maxim with me'" (Masson).

## LYCIDAS.

**Lycidas** was written to commemorate the death of Edward King, one of Milton's friends at Cambridge. His father, Sir John King, was a member of the Privy Council of Ireland and Secretary of the Irish Viceregal Government. Although Edward King proved to be a young man of considerable promise, it is quite probable that no small part of his popularity at Christ's College, where he was admitted June 9, 1626, as well as of his success in securing a Fellowship, assigned to him by a royal mandate June 10, 1630, was due to his high social standing. The Fellowship, in fact, would very likely have gone to Milton, if the matter had been decided according to merit. King took the degree of M.A. in July, 1633, became a Tutor in his college, and was "praelector" in 1634–1635. In the summer vacation of 1637, he prepared to go by ship from Chester Bay to Dublin. But the vessel had proceeded only a short distance when it struck a rock and went down. Among the passengers who were drowned — and only a few seem to have escaped — was Edward King.

In the autumn of that year, when King's friends learned of his death, it was proposed to issue from the university press a volume of memorial verses. To this end Milton wrote *Lycidas* in November, 1637, although the volume itself did not appear until 1638. The book was made up of two parts, the one containing twenty-three pieces in Latin and Greek, and the other, thirteen in English. Last of all came Milton's poem, signed with only the poet's initials, "J. M." Prefixed to the Latin and Greek portion of the volume there was an account in Latin of the manner of King's death. Here is a portion of Masson's translation of it: "Edward King (son of John, knight, and Privy Councillor for the Kingdom of Ireland to their Majesties, Elizabeth, James, and Charles), Fellow of Christ's College in the University of Cambridge, happy in the consciousness and in the fame of piety and erudition, and one in whom there was nothing immature except his age, was on a voyage to Ireland, drawn by natural affection to visit his native country, his relatives and his friends, . . . when, the ship in which he was having struck on a rock, not far from the British coast, and being stove in by the shock, he, while the other passengers were fruitlessly busy about their mortal lives, having fallen on his knees, and breathing a life which was immortal, in the act of prayer going down with the vessel, rendered

up his soul to God, Aug. 10, 1637, aged 25." [1] *Lycidas* was reprinted in the 1645 and 1673 editions of Milton's poems, and in 1645 the subtitle, "In this Monody," etc., was first added.

50 1. **Yet once more.** Milton had not, so far as is known, written any poetry since *Comus* (1634), but whether the present phrase refers merely to *Comus*, or to his previous elegiac poems, or is simply a sort of formula to signify the beginning of a new poem, we can only conjecture. The *laurel*, the *myrtle*, and the *ivy* seem to be symbolical of poetry in general, although some editors give to each plant a particular significance. It has also been observed that, as the plants are evergreens, they may be regarded as emblems of immortality. What reason can you assign for the omission of the rhyme in ll. 1, 13, 15, 22, 39 51, 82, 91, 92, 161? What other peculiarity do you notice about the rhymes in this poem?

50 2. **Brown.** Dusky, dark; *cf. Il P.* 134. See Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, Vol. III. chap. 15. *Sere*, dry; *cf.* Shakspere's exquisite use of the word in *Macb.* v. 3. 23.

50 3. **Crude.** Unripe.

50 4. **Forced.** Unwilling; explained in 6–7.

50 5. **Shatter.** Scatter. *Before the mellowing year;* here, as in the last two lines, Milton alludes to his own lack of "inward ripeness" (see sonnet written at the age of twenty-three) for undertaking the high calling of poet, which from various sources we know he regarded with a veneration that fell little short of worship. He even emphasizes this thought to the neglect of his figure, which, if curiously examined, will be found wanting in accuracy.

50 6. **Sad occasion dear.** For the word order, see on *L'Al.* 40. The *sad occasion* is probably called *dear* because it touches the poet "nearly." This meaning of the word is common enough in Elizabethan English, and we often find it applied to that which is disagreeable, as, for example, in *Ham.* i. 2. 182.

50 7. **Compels.** On the use of a singular verb with two singular nouns as subject, see Abbott, § 336. *Due*, proper.

50 8. **Lycidas.** In taking a name from ancient pastoral poetry (*cf.* Theocritus, *Idyl* vii., Virgil, *Eclogue* ix.) and applying it to his friend, Edward King, Milton adopts the conventional method of treating his

[1] Another account, quoted by Todd from a preface by W. Hogg (1694), stated "that 'some escaped in the boat,' and that they vainly tried to get King into it, so that he and the rest were drowned, 'except those only who escaped in the boat'" (Jerram).

subject. *Ere his prime;* being only twenty-five years old. Note the repetition in this and the succeeding verse; *cf. Death of a Fair Infant* 25–26, and Spenser, *Astrophel* 7–8:

> "Young Astrophel, the pride of shepheards praise,
> Young Astrophel, the rusticke lasses love."

50 10. **Who would not sing,** etc. *Cf.* Virgil, *Eclogue* x. 3: *neget quis carmina Gallo? He knew; cf. C.* 87.

50 11. **Rhyme.** Verse. Only a few Latin pieces written by King have come down to us, and they are said not to justify the praise here accorded him; but Milton may have seen other specimens of his composition of which we know nothing. On this subject, see Masson, Vol. I. pp. 188–189. For the metaphor, Newton compares Horace, *Epist.* i. 3. 24: *seu condis amabile carmen*, and Hurd compares Euripides, *Supplices* 998: ἀοιδὰς ἐπύργωσε (quoted by Masson).

50 13. **Welter to.** Explain.

50 14. **Melodious tear.** Melody accompanied by tears. As *tear* was not infrequently used of elegiac poems, the epithet *melodious* may properly describe it. *Cf.* Milton's *Epitaph on the Marchioness of Winchester* 55, and Spenser's *The Teares of the Muses.* The present line has been frequently imitated by poets since Milton.

50 15. **Begin, then,** etc. This invocation of the Muses is in the customary manner of pastoral poets. *Well*, spring; in this case, the Pierian spring at the foot of Mt. Olympus in Thessaly seems to be meant. Mt. Olympus was the Homeric abode (*seat*) of Jove and the birthplace of the nine Muses, or *Sisters of the sacred well.* But see Jerram and Hales.

50 17. **Somewhat loudly,** etc. *Cf.* Drummond, *Elegy on Gustavus Adolphus* (quoted by Todd):

> "Speak it again, and louder louder yet;
> Else while we hear the sound we shall forget
> What it delivers."

Explain the figurative use of *string.*

50 19. **Muse.** Poet.

50 20. **My destined urn.** "I have ventured to italicise the word *my* in this passage, to bring out fully the meaning" (Masson). *Urn*, tomb; *cf. Cor.* v. 6. 146. The word, however, may be used in its ordinary sense of "a receptacle for the ashes of the dead." *Lucky words;* explain.

50 22. **Shroud.** Winding-sheet, although others variously interpret it "grave" (Dunster, referred to by Todd), "coffin" (Hales), or "the darkness in which I am shrouded" (Bell). The word is used by Milton in *Nat.* 218, *C.* 147, and *P. L.* x. 1068. It seems best, with Todd and others, to make the paragraph end with this line, instead of l. 24, as in Milton's own editions.

51 23–36. **For we were nursed,** etc. Under the guise of pastoral language Milton now describes his companionship with King at Christ's College, Cambridge. While this is a passage where "more is meant than meets the ear," it would be absurd to insist on finding a hidden meaning in every pastoral phrase. Some of the details were doubtless put in because the conventional treatment of the subject seemed to require them.

51 25. **Lawns.** See on *L'Al.* 71.

51 26. **The opening eyelids of the Morn.** This fine phrase, often repeated or imitated by other poets, was traced by Todd to *Job* iii. 9 (marginal reading); also *cf. Job* xli. 18. Milton, it should be remembered, was habitually an early riser, and so became acquainted with the beauties of the morning. *Cf. L'Al.* 41–68, *P. L.* v. 1–25, ix. 192–200. Observe how the other two periods of the day are indicated in 28, 29–31.

51 27. **Drove.** Drove our flocks; but the verb may be intransitive. *A-field;* see on *L'Al.* 20. For Johnson's unappreciative comment on this and the two following lines, as well as on the whole poem, see his life of Milton in *Lives of the Poets.*

51 28. **What time.** See on *C.* 291. *Grey-fly*, "a species of *Œstrus*, also known as the *trumpet-fly*, from its *sultry horn*, or loud humming in the heat of the day" (Rolfe).

51 29. **Battening.** Fattening. *Fresh dews*, etc.; Jerram cites Virgil, *Eclogue* viii. 15, *Georgics* iii. 324–326.

51 30–31. **Oft till the star,** etc. "The evening star appears, not rises, and is never anywhere but *on* Heaven's descent" (Keightley, quoted by Browne). Spenser, however, made the same mistake in *F. Q.* iii. 4. 51, and Jerram finds some classical authority for the error. For other references to Hesperus, see Orchard, *Astronomy of Milton's 'Paradise Lost,'* pp. 277–281.

51 32. **Rural ditties.** If Masson is right in interpreting these as "academic iambics and elegiacs," what poems, in Milton's case, would they include? For King's work, see on 11.

51 33. **Tempered.** Attuned. *Oaten flute*, shepherd's pipe; *cf.* 88, 188, *C.* 345 and note. Jerram has a long note here, in which he shows

that although "the oaten pipe has been chosen by English poets as the representative of pastoral music, the classical authority for such usage is more than doubtful."

51 34. **Rough Satyrs,** etc. See *Class. Dict.*; *cf.* Hawthorne's *Marble Faun.*

51 36. **Damœtas.** Another name taken from pastoral poetry; *cf.* Theocritus, *Idyl* vi., etc. While it is impossible positively to identify *old Damœtas* with any particular person, most editors find in the name an allusion to Mr. Chappell, the tutor with whom Milton had the trouble which resulted in his temporary rustication. If this is true, Jerram may be right in supposing that the satyrs and fauns may represent "the wilder and less studious undergraduates of Christ's," though this seems to be carrying the interpretation of the passage to a dangerous extreme.

51 37. **But, oh!** etc. "Milton, before making the echoes mourn for Lycidas, puts our feelings in tune, as it were, and hints at his own imagination as the source of this emotion in inanimate things."—Lowell, *Works* (Houghton), Vol. IV. p. 29.

51 38. **Must.** "Perhaps there is a fine courtesy in the use of this word here instead of 'mayest.' The poet, having to say that his friend will never return, says that, 'he is not compelled to return,' rather than 'he is not permitted to return.' Or perhaps must = art appointed or ordained" (Hales).

51 39. **Thee, Shepherd,** etc. What is the effect of the repetition in this line? *Cf. F. Q.* iv. 10. 44, Virgil, *Georgics* iv. 466, etc.

51 40. **Gadding.** Straggling. Browne quotes Marvell, *Appleton House:* "Curl me about, ye gadding vines."

51 41. **Mourn.** An example of what Ruskin calls the "Pathetic fallacy"; see *Modern Painters*, Vol. III. chap. 12.

51 44. **Fanning.** Moving like fans; *cf. P. L.* iv. 157.

51 45. **Canker.** The canker-worm; *cf. T. G. of V.* i. 1. 43, etc.

51 47. **Wardrobe.** Explain the figure.

51 48. **White-thorn.** The hawthorn; *cf. L'Al.* 68.

51 49. **Such.** Explain the force of this word.

51–52 50–55. **Where were ye,** etc. In imitation of Theocritus, *Idyl* i. 66–69, and Virgil, *Eclogue* x. 9–12. Milton followed Theocritus in selecting for the haunts of the nymphs such places as were near the scene of Lycidas's disaster, and Virgil in identifying the nymphs with the Muses. Of the two imitations of Theocritus, Virgil's and Milton's, that of Milton is immeasurably the superior.

51 52. **Steep.** Probably Kerig-y-Druidion in Denbighshire (War-

ton), though Keightley suggests Penmaenmawr in Carnarvonshire, opposite Anglesey.

52 54. **Mona.** The island of Anglesey, in whose oak groves the Druids in olden times conducted their mystic rites.

52 55. **Deva.** The river Dee, which once formed a part of the boundary between England and Wales, is called a *wizard stream* because it was supposed to be frequented by wizards. Of the many superstitions connected with the river, one supposed that it boded ill to the people of the country toward which it changed its course. On this last point, see Morris and Skeat, *Specimens of Early English*, Pt. II. p. 240. *Cf. Vacation Exercise* 98.

52 56. **Fondly.** Foolishly; see on *Il P.* 6.

52 57. **For.** This depends on *fondly*. In his treatment of the figures of contrast, Gummere observes that "the most abrupt contrast arises when the construction comes suddenly to an end, is broken off violently, and a new sentence begins in a new direction. The famous Vergilian example is where Neptune rebukes the winds, and begins to threaten, but leaves the threat unfinished: —

> 'Quos ego — sed motos præstat componere fluctus.'"
>
> *Handbook of Poetics*, p. 125.

52 58. **The Muse.** Calliope. For the story of Orpheus's death, see *Class. Dict.*; the legend is repeated in *P. L.* vii. 32–39.

52 59. **Enchanting son.** See the song in *Hen. VIII.* iii. 1. 3–14.

52 61. **Rout.** *Cf. P. L.* i. 747.

52 63. **Swift Hebrus.** Milton seems to have followed Virgil, *Æneid* i. 317: *volucrem Hebrum*, but Servius's remark that the river *quietissimus est* has led to a deal of discussion among Milton's editors. *Lesbian shore;* "According to common tradition the head of Orpheus was carried by the waves to Lesbos, and there buried, for which pious office the Lesbians were rewarded with the gift of preeminence in song" (Jerram).

52 64. **Boots.** Avails. *Uncessant;* so in Milton's first and second editions (Masson). Ll. 64–84 constitute one of the two long digressions in the poem, the other being ll. 113–131. After you have carefully studied the whole poem, read again these two passages, and try to determine whether the poem would be the better or the worse for their omission.

52 65. **To tend,** etc. To practise poetry; as Hales notes, the metaphor is used in a different sense in 113–131. *Homely;* define.

52 66. **Meditate the . . . Muse.** The phrase is from Virgil, *Eclogue* i. 2 : *Silvestrem tenue musam meditaris avena ;* see on *C.* 547. *Thankless*, profitless; some editors, however, take *Muse* to be personified, in which case *thankless* = ungrateful.

52 68–69. **Amaryllis . . . Neæra.** These are names of shepherdesses in pastoral poetry. Here they may be said to represent a life of luxury and its attendant follies, a life to which Milton, the advocate and living example of "labour and intense study," was so much opposed. This seems to me a more natural interpretation than that which supposes that Milton is alluding to the amatory poetry then so fashionable.

52 70. **Clear.** Illustrious, noble (Latin *clarus*). In his *Adonais*, Shelley speaks of Milton's *clear Sprite*:

> "He died,
> Who was the Sire of an immortal strain,
> Blind, old, and lonely, when his country's pride,
> The priest, the slave, and the liberticide,
> Trampled and mocked with many a loathèd rite
> Of lust and blood; he went, unterrified,
> Into the gulf of death; but his clear Sprite
> Yet reigns o'er earth; the third among the sons of light."

52 71. **That last infirmity,** etc. The sentiment here expressed is a common one; as one instance out of many, *cf.* Tacitus, *Hist.* iv. 6: *etiam sapientibus cupido gloriæ novissima exuitur.* See the discussion on "glory," *P. R.* iii. 25 *et seq.*

52 72. **To scorn delights,** etc. This line is admirably descriptive of Milton's own life.

52 75. **The blind Fury.** The poet purposely calls Atropos, one of the three Fates, "the blind Fury," because in her indiscriminate disregard for the value of life she acted with all the cruelty of a Fury. For the individual occupations of Atropos and her sisters, see *Class. Dict.*, and, if possible, some reproduction of Michael Angelo's "The Fates." There is a reproduction of the latter in Gayley, *Classic Myths.*

52 76. **Slits.** The ordinary meaning? *But not the praise ;* explain the zeugma. What effect is gained by omitting the verb?

52 77. **Touched my trembling ears.** From Virgil, *Eclogue* vi. 3–4:

> *Cum canerem reges et prœlia, Cynthius aurem*
> *Vellit, et admonuit ;*

where Conington observes that touching the ear was a symbolical act, the ear being regarded as the seat of memory. In the present instance, then, it is to remind the poet of something he has forgotten. But Masson thinks Milton alludes to the "popular humour that the tingling of a person's ears is a sign that somewhere people are talking of him and saying good or ill of him in his absence. . . . What Milton had been saying about poetic fame was evidently applicable to himself personally, and would, he saw, be so understood by his readers."

52 80. **Set off to the world.** Does this limit *Fame* or *foil?* Show clearly what the meaning would be in each case. *Nor . . . nor*, neither . . . nor.

52 81. **By.** By means of; though some editors take it to mean "hard by," "near," "in the presence of." *Spreads; cf.* 78.

53 85. **O fountain Arethuse,** etc. Arethusa, a fountain in Sicily, represents the pastoral poetry written by Theocritus and other Greek poets, while the Mincius, near which Virgil was born, represents the pastoral poetry written by the Latin poets. For the pretty myth connected with Arethusa, see *Class. Dict.* In his description of the Mincius, Milton follows Virgil. *Honoured* by Virgil's poetry.

53 87. **That strain,** etc. *Cf.* 76–84. *Mood*, "'character,' from *modus*, signifying a particular arrangement of intervals in the musical scale. . . . The word has nothing to do with a 'mood' or *state of mind*" (Jerram).

53 88. **My oat.** See on 33.

53 89. **The Herald of the Sea.** Triton, the son of Neptune, was the trumpeter of the ocean, and raised or calmed the waves by blowing on his "winding shell" (*concha*). *Cf. C.* 873.

53 90. **In Neptune's plea.** Editors are divided as to the meaning of *plea*. Some, with Keightley, think the word refers to a judicial inquiry into the cause of Lycidas's death to be held by Triton for Neptune, while others think it means nothing more than the defense made by Neptune through Triton.

53 91. **Felon winds.** Why the epithet?

53 92. **What hard mishap,** etc. This is the actual question put by Triton.

53 93. **Gust of rugged wings.** Explain; *cf. P. L.* xi. 738–740. *Every . . . each;* see on *C.* 19.

53 96. **Hippotades.** Æolus; see *Class. Dict.*

53 97. **His.** This may refer to Hippotades, or it may be the equivalent of *its*. It is not likely that *blast* is personified.

53 98. **Level brine.** What does the epithet imply? See on 99.

53 99. **Panope.** One of the fifty daughters of Nereus; it is significant that the name (Πανόπη), as Jerram remarks, denotes "a wide view."

53 100. **It was,** etc. "Curiously enough, the poem in the Cambridge collection by Edward King's brother implies that the vessel struck on a rock during a gale. . . . Probably Henry King was better informed as to the details of the shipwreck than Milton could be. Nowhere else is there a hint that the ship was simply unseaworthy" (Verity).

53 101. **Built in the eclipse.** Many passages might be quoted from Greek and Roman writers, as well as from those of later ages, to show that eclipses were regarded with superstitious awe. It was thought that anything done during an eclipse, especially if it was an eclipse of the moon, was bound to have an unlucky end. See Brand, *Popular Antiquities; cf. P. L.* i. 596–599. *Rigged with curses dark.* What do you understand by this?

53 103. **Next, Camus,** etc. The tutelary genius of the river Cam and of Cambridge University. Masson quotes a Latin note to a Greek translation of *Lycidas* by Mr. John Plumtre, which explains the characteristic garb of Camus: "The mantle is as if made of the plant 'river-sponge' which floats copiously in the Cam; the *bonnet* of the river-sedge, distinguished by vague marks traced somehow over the middle of the leaves, and serrated at the edge of the leaves, after the fashion of the αἴ αἴ of the hyacinth." *Footing slow; cf. F. Q.* i. 3. 10: "A damzell spyde slow footing her before."

53 105. **Figures dim.** Warburton thought there was an allusion here to the "fabulous traditions of the high antiquity of Cambridge," but Todd reports Dunster as remarking "that on sedge leaves, or flags, when dried or even beginning to wither, there are not only certain *dim*, or indistinct, and dusky streaks, but also a variety of dotted marks (*scrawl'd over*, as Milton had at first written,) on the edge, which withers before the rest of the flag."

53 106. **That sanguine flower,** etc. The hyacinth is meant. The marks on the edge of the sedge (see on 105) Milton identifies with the αἴ αἴ (*alas! alas!*) which the Greeks fancied they saw on the petals of the hyacinth, and which they supposed commemorated the death of Hyacinthus, the youth from whose blood (hence *sanguine*) they thought the flower had sprung. See *Class. Dict.*; *cf. Death of a Fair Infant* 23–27.

53 107. **Pledge.** Child ; so *pignus* in Latin.

53 108. **Last came,** etc. For Pattison's comment on the passage which this line introduces, see Introduction, p. xvii.

53 109. **The Pilot of the Galilean Lake.** St. Peter, who is introduced as the representative of the Church. In the gospel narrative Peter is nowhere spoken of as a *pilot*, and the meaning here probably is that he was the steersman of his own ship, a sense in which Jerram reminds us *pilot* is often used. It will be remembered that King had intended to enter the ministry of the Church of England.

53 110. **Two massy keys,** etc. *Cf. Matt.* xvi. 19; it was tradition, not Scripture, which made the number of the keys *two.*

53 112. **His mitred locks.** Why *mitred?*

53–54 113–131. **How well,** etc. In order to understand the significance of this speech, it is necessary to know something of the political and religious condition of England about the time *Lycidas* was written. See Green, *Short History of the English People*, Gardiner, *The Puritan Revolution.* How many, and what grounds of complaint does Milton here urge against the clergy?

53 115. **Creep, and intrude, and climb.** Ruskin, in his *Sesame and Lilies*, observes that these three verbs "exhaustively comprehend the three classes, correspondent to the three characters, of men who dishonestly seek ecclesiastical power. First, those who 'creep' into the fold; who do not care for office, nor name, but for secret influence, and do all things occultly and cunningly, consenting to any servility of office or conduct, so only that they may intimately discern, and unawares direct, the minds of men. Then those who 'intrude' (thrust, that is) themselves into the fold, who by natural insolence of heart, and stout eloquence of tongue, and fearlessly perseverant self-assertion, obtain hearing and authority with the common crowd. Lastly, those who 'climb,' who by labour and learning, both stout and sound, but selfishly exerted in the cause of their own ambition, gain high dignities and authorities, and become 'lords over the heritage,' though not 'ensamples to the flock.'"

54 117. **Shearers' feast.** What do you understand by this?

54 118. **The worthy bidden guest.** *Cf. Matt.* xxii. 8.

54 119. **Blind mouths!** An exceedingly bold figure, which may, however, be supported by classical authority. There is even classical authority (*cf.* Horace, *Sat.* ii. 2. 39–40) for the figure that follows, by which *mouths* are made *to hold A sheep-hook,*—an idea which Landor thought "a fitter representation of the shepherd's dog than of the shepherd."

Ruskin, nevertheless, finds much to admire in the figure. He says "its very audacity and pithiness are intended to make us look close at the phrase and remember it. Those two monosyllables express the precisely accurate contraries of right character, in the two great offices of the Church — those of bishop and pastor. A 'Bishop' means a 'person who sees.' A 'Pastor' means a 'person who feeds.' The most unbishoply character a man can have is therefore to be Blind. The most unpastoral is, instead of feeding, to want to be fed, — to be a Mouth. Take the two reverses together, and you have 'blind mouths.'" See *Sesame and Lilies* for Ruskin's further comment on this figure, as well as on the whole passage, ll. 108–131.

54 122. **They are sped.** They are provided for.

54 123. **When they list.** That is, *only* when they please. *Lean;* meaning here? *Flashy;* the word is here used in the same sense in which Bacon uses it in his essay *Of Studies*, where he speaks of distilled books as being "like common distilled waters, flashy things," *i.e.*, "insipid," "tasteless." The word is quite distinct from our *flashy*, showy.

54 124. **Scrannel.** "Slight; slender; thin; squeaking" (*Cent. Dict.*). What is the effect of the combination of consonants in this line?

54 126. **Wind and the rank mist,** etc. Unsound and unwholesome doctrines. *Draw*, inhale.

54 128. **The grim wolf.** The Church of Rome, which at that time was winning to itself many converts. Jerram notes that "the simile of wolves and sheep assumes three distinct forms in the New Testament — (1) *the wolf in sheep's clothing* (Matt. vii. 15), who enters the fold under false pretences; (2) *the shepherd* who for his rapacity is said to devour the sheep (Acts xx. 29); (3) *the real wolf*, prowling outside the fold and seeking an entrance. The last appears to be the one here intended."

54 129. **And nothing said.** That is, the clergy say nothing against this system of proselytism; see on 128.

54 130–131. **That two-handed engine,** etc. This is the *crux* of the poem. Our first concern must be to get the general meaning of the passage. This is, "But the instrument of retribution is at hand and is ready once for all to smite the corrupt Church." The *engine* (literally, "something skillful") is called *two-handed* because it is wielded with two hands. All this is clear. The difficulty comes in getting anything more definite out of the expression *two-handed engine*. If Milton intended to convey to our minds any particular image, which is doubtful,

Jerram's explanation is as good as any, namely, that Milton is here using the familiar simile of the axe "laid unto the root of the trees" (*Matt.* iii. 10, etc.). Other editors have sought to identify the *two-handed engine* with (2) the axe with which Laud was beheaded in 1645; (3) the sword of the Archangel Michael (*P. L.* vi. 250–253); (4) the "sharp twoedged sword" of *Rev.* i. 16, ii. 12–16; (5) the English Parliament with its two Houses (Masson); (6) the scythe of the executioner Death; (7) the two-handed sword of romance (Warburton); (8) the sword of Justice (Verity); (9) the civil and ecclesiastical powers; and (10) "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (*Ephesians* vi. 17), which we wield by "a double grip, on the Old Testament and on the New" (Morley).

54 132. **Alpheus.** The river-god who pursued Arethusa. See *Class. Dict.*; *cf.* 85. As Alpheus symbolizes pastoral poetry, Milton now returns, after his digression in ll. 108–131, to his proper theme. *The dread voice; cf.* 112.

54 133. **Sicilian Muse.** The muse of Theocritus, but here, perhaps, merely a general designation of pastoral poetry.

54 134. **Hither.** See 151.

54 136. **Use.** Haunt. The meaning is, "where the mild whispers of shades, etc., haunt." Can you explain how *use* came to have this meaning?

54 137. **Wanton winds.** See on *L'Al.* 26–28.

54 138. **The swart star.** Sirius, the dog-star, called *swart* because it was thought to be a *swart*-making (*i.e.*, tanning) star. Hales says it "rose at Athens about the time of the greatest heat, and was therefore supposed to cause that heat."

54 139. **Quaint.** Curious, fantastic. *Enamelled*, "variegated and glossy as enamel-work" (Verity). *Eyes*, blossoms.

54 140. **Honeyed.** Explain the formation of this word; *cf. mitred*, 112.

54 141. **Purple.** Empurple; but here used, like the Latin *purpureus*, for any bright color (Jerram). *Vernal flowers;* Keightley observes that some of the flowers belong to summer and autumn.

54–55 142–151. **Bring the rathe primrose,** etc. This passage should be carefully compared with other passages of this sort in English poetry,—for instance, Spenser, *Shepheardes Calender*, Ecl. iv. 136–144, Shakspere, *W. T.* iv. 4. 73–129, *Cymb.* iv. 2. 218–229, Ben Jonson, *Pan's Anniversary*, Milton, *P. L.* iv. 692–703, Keats, *Endymion* ii. 408–419. The reader will also call to mind many poems

like Wordsworth's *Daffodils*, poems devoted to the praise of flowers. See Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, Pt. III. sec. 2, chap. 3, for a distinction between fancy and imagination as well as for the application of the same to *Lyc.* 142–148, and to *W. T.* iv. 4. 116–125. He says: "In Milton it happens, I think, generally, and in the case before us most certainly, that the imagination is mixed and broken with fancy, and so the strength of the imagery is part of iron and part of clay." In l. 142 he finds "Imagination," l. 143 "Nugatory," l. 144 "Fancy," l. 145 "Imagination," l. 146 "Fancy, vulgar," l. 147 "Imagination," l. 148 "Mixed." On the passage from the *W. T.*, he says: "Observe how the imagination in these last lines goes into the very inmost soul of every flower, after having touched them all at first with that heavenly timidness, the shadow of Proserpine's; and gilded them with celestial gathering, and never stops on their spots, or their bodily shape, while Milton sticks in the stains upon them, and puts us off with that unhappy freak of jet in the very flower that without this bit of paper-staining would have been the most precious to us of all. 'There is pansies, that 's for thoughts.'"

54 142. **Rathe.** Early; *cf.* Tennyson, *In Memoriam* cx. What meaning do you find in *primrose?* Why *forsaken?* Coleridge called this the "sweetest line in the Lycidas" (*Anima Poetae*, p. 61). See Introduction, xlii.

54 144. **The white pink,** etc. *Cf. C.* 851.

54 145. **Glowing.** Landor thought *gloming* would be better than *glowing*. Do you agree?

55 148. **Sad.** See on *Il P.* 43.

55 149. **Amaranthus.** Etymological meaning? *His*, its.

55 150. **Fill their cups with tears.** Explain.

55 151. **Laureate.** Crowned with laurel. "The *herse* was a platform, decorated with black hangings, and containing an effigy of the deceased. Laudatory verses were attached to it with pins, wax, or paste." — Stanley, *Memorials of Westminster Abbey*, p. 341 (quoted by Jerram).

55 152–164. **For so,** etc. What irregularity do you note in the construction of this passage?

55 153. **Surmise.** "The First and Second Editions have a full stop after '*surmise*'; which rather impairs the effect of the meaning" (Masson).

55 154. **Shores.** "Did Milton write *shoals?*" (Lowell). For a comment on this line, as well as *Il P.* 74–75, see Lowell, *Works* (Houghton), Vol. IV. p. 100.

55 156. **Hebrides.** Locate.

55 158. **The monstrous world.** Explain; *cf. C.* 533. For Shakspere's description of *the monstrous world*, see *Rich. III.* i. 4. 16–33.

55 159. **Moist vows.** "Vows accompanied with tears" (Warton), possibly, as Bell suggests, referring "to those promises of thanksgiving and offerings made to Neptune that he might restore the bodies of those who had been drowned."

55 160. **The fable of Bellerus.** The fabled abode of Bellerus. *Bellerus* seems to have been coined by Milton from *Bellerium*, the Roman name of Land's End.

55 161. **The great Vision of the guarded mount.** "The 'guarded (fortified) Mount' is a steep rock opposite Marazion near Penzance, accessible from the land at low water. On it are the ruins of a fortress and a monastery, with a church dedicated to St. Michael; at the summit is a craggy seat called St. Michael's chair, in which several apparitions of the archangel are reported to have been seen; hence the 'great Vision' in the text" (Jerram). It seems better, however, to take *guarded* as referring to "the watch kept by the angel" (Hales).

55 162. **Namancos and Bayona's hold.** Verity has a long note here, in which he attempts to show that Milton may have got these names from the edition of *Mercator's Atlas* published in 1636 (Todd, at the suggestion of a friend, first discovered the names in the editions of 1623 and 1636), in which *Namancos* is put down as a fortress in the Spanish province Galicia, near Cape Finisterre, with the castle (*hold*) of *Bayona* to the south, on the sea.

55 163. **Angel.** St. Michael. For arguments favoring Lycidas as the angel addressed, see Jerram; also consult Trent's note.

55 164. **Ye dolphins,** etc. For the legend of Arion, see *Class. Dict.*

55 165. **Weep no more,** etc. Keightley thus accentuates:

"Weep nó more, woeful shepherds, weep no móre."

*Cf. Much Ado* ii. 3. 64. Of the idea in the following lines, the beatification of the dead, many examples might be cited. See *Epitaphium Damonis*, *Death of a Fair Infant*, and *Epitaph on the Marchioness of Winchester*.

55 166. **Your sorrow.** The object of your sorrow. Name the figure.

55 168. **The day-star.** The sun; *cf. II Peter* i. 19. But see Jerram, who thinks that here, as in l. 30, Milton "is most likely to have followed the usage of the ancients, who commonly speak of

Lucifer and Hesperus in this way." See what Nadal says on this passage in *Library of the World's Best Literature*, Vol. XXV. p. 10,044.

55 169. **Anon.** At once. *Repairs*, refreshes.

55 170. **Tricks.** See on *Il P.* 123. *New-spangled ore*, freshly glittering gold. For *ore* in the sense of "gold," *cf. C.* 933, *Ham.* iv. 1. 25, *A. W.* iii. 6. 40, etc.

55 173. **Him that walked the waves.** *Cf. Matt.* xiv. 22 *et seq.* The allusion, as many editors have noted, is supremely apposite.

55 174. **Other groves,** etc. Explain.

55 175. **With nectar,** etc. *Cf. C.* 836 *et seq.* "Nectar with ambrosia is said to have been used by way of ablution to preserve immortality, as well as for the food and drink of the gods" (Jerram). He compares *Iliad* xiv. 170, xix. 39. *Oozy locks;* why the epithet?

55 176. **Unexpressive.** Inexpressible. *Nuptial song; cf. Rev.* xix. 6–7.

55 177. **Kingdoms meek.** Explain.

56 178. **Entertain.** Receive.

56 181. **And wipe the tears,** etc. *Cf. Rev.* vii. 17, xxi. 4, *Isaiah* xxv. 8.

56 183. **The Genius of the shore.** Note the return to paganism. This mingling of pagan and Christian elements is a relic of the tendency that ran riot in Spenser's *Faerie Queene* and similar works of the English Renaissance. On this point see Beers, *Hist. of Eng. Rom.*, p. 37.

56 184. **In thy large recompense.** That is, by way of large reward to thee.

56 185. **Perilous.** A dissyllable.

56 186. **Uncouth.** Unknown; some, however, prefer to take the word in the sense of "rude," "uncultivated." See on *L'Al.* 5.

56 187. **The still morn,** etc. *Cf. C.* 188–190, *P. R.* iv. 426–427. Richard Grant White, I believe, somewhere quotes *Ham.* i. 1. 166–167, in order to prove the superiority of Shakspere's imagination over Milton's. Find the lines, and compare them with this.

56 188. **Stops of various quills.** The *stops* are here the small holes in the shepherds' pipes (*quills*) by which the sound is regulated. See on *C.* 345; *cf. Ham.* iii. 2. 360–389. See on *Il P.* 82.

56 189. **Doric.** Pastoral; Theocritus, Bion, and Moschus wrote the Doric dialect. If the student does not read Greek, he should make the acquaintance of these poets through the prose version by Andrew Lang.

56 190. **And now the sun,** etc. *Cf.* Virgil, *Eclogue* i. 84: *Majoresque*

*cadunt altis de montibus umbræ.* Do you get the full meaning of Milton's line?

56 193. **To-morrow to fresh woods,** etc. As Masson observes, this line is frequently misquoted, *fields* being substituted for *woods*. He compares Phineas Fletcher, *Purple Island* (1633), vi. 77–78:

> "Home, then, my lambs; the falling drops eschew:
> To-morrow shall ye feast in pastures new."

In the *fresh woods*, etc., there is a very probable allusion to Milton's projected Italian tour, if we do not read into the passage a more definite reference than he intended to convey.

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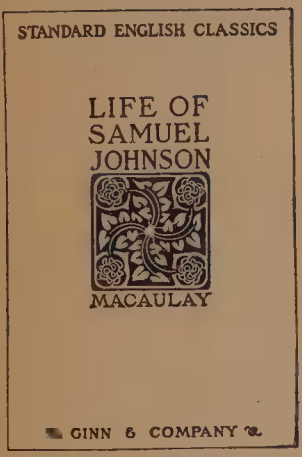


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